

*A PRICELESS TREASURY ABOUT
THE STRUGGLE AND BATTLE
BETWEEN TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD*

STORIES FROM THE QUR'AN

Qasas-ul-Qur'an

(قصص القرآن)

By

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VOL 1

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

S.No	Description	Page No
■	Publisher's Note.....	11
■	Preface	13
VOLUME - I		
01. HAZRAT ADAM ﷺ		17
■	The First Human	17
■	Adam in the Qur'an	19
■	Adam's Birth.....	20
■	Satan Begg for Respite	22
■	Adam's Caliphate.....	25
■	Adam and Eve in Paradise ...	28
■	Their Expulsion.....	28
■	Are Adam and Eve Arab or Gentile Names?.....	32
■	Satan.....	33
■	Eve	33
■	Was Adam a Nabi and Rasool?.....	36
■	Adam's Innocence	38
■	Angels.....	40
■	Jinn.....	43
■	Important Lessons.....	45
■	Çain and Abel	46
■	The Lesson	48
02. HARZRAT NOOH ﷺ		51
■	The First Prophet.....	51
■	Genealogy	51
■	Age at the Time of the Son's Birth	51
■	Nooh in the Qur'an	52
■	Reason of Ark	56
■	Son of Nooh.....	57
■	Mount Judi	59
■	A Moral Issue	61
■	Where did Nooh's Ark come to Rest?	63
■	Important conclusions.....	64
03. HARZRAT IDREES ﷺ		67
■	Genealogy	67
■	Idrees in the Eyes of Philosophers.....	69
■	Teachings of Idrees.....	70
■	Appearance	71
04. HARZRAT HOUD ﷺ		75
■	Their Religion	76
■	Demise of Houd.....	86
■	Some Lessons	86
05. HARZRAT SALEH ﷺ		89
■	Genealogy	89
■	Thamud Habitations.....	90
■	The Time.....	91
■	What is Mojiza (Miracle).....	92
■	The she-camel of Allah.....	95
06. HARZRAT IBRAHIM ﷺ		109
■	Genealogy	109
■	Ibrahim in the Qur'an	118

- Ibrahim's Stature..... 119
 - Invitation to his father 121
 - Invitation to the Nation 122
 - Invitation to the King 133
 - Ibrahim's Solicitude and Guidance for the People..... 143
 - Ibrahim's Migration 144
 - Ibrahim and two important occasions 147
 - Second Occasion..... 149
- 07. HARZRAT ISMAIL ؑ.....155**
- Birth 155
 - The Circumcision 163
 - The Great Sacrifice 163
 - The Ka'ba 167
 - Children of Ismail 171
- 08. HARZRAT ISHAQ ؑ.....173**
- The Circumcision..... 175
 - Marriage..... 175
 - Hazrat Ibrahim 176
- 09. HARZRAT LOOT ؑ.....179**
- Loot and His Mission..... 181
 - Ibrahim and the Angels..... 182
 - Issues..... 187
 - Ibrahim..... 189
 - Lessons..... 191
- 10. HARZRAT YAQOOB ؑ.....195**
- Yaqoob in the Qur'an..... 195
 - Israel 196
 - Yaqoob's Children 196
- 11. HARZRAT YUSUF ؑ.....197**
- Genealogy 197
 - Yusuf in Qur'an 197
 - Yusuf's Dream and His Brother 198
 - The Cave or Dry Water Well..... 201
 - Yusuf and Servitude 202
 - Yusuf in Egypt..... 202
 - Master's Wife and Yusuf... 204
 - Yusuf in the Prison 211
 - Preaching 211
 - Pharaoh's Dream 214
 - The Genesis records..... 219
 - Jacob's Family in Egypt 232
 - Death..... 234
 - Important Moral Prospects. 235
- 12. HARZRAT SHUAYB ؑ.....241**
- The Advent 242
 - The Invitation..... 242
 - Nature of Punishment 245
 - Lessons 247
- 13. HARZRAT MUSA ؑ.....251**
- The Pharaoh of Musa ؑ... 253
 - Pharaoh's Dream 256
 - Lineage And Birth 259
 - Departure from Egypt 262

- Musa ﷺ in Midian266
- Pharaoh's court and the Invitation to Truth288
- Discussion on the Lord Allah of Providence291
- Haman295
- Sahar or Magic299
- Sahar and religion302
- Difference between miracle and magic303
- The Encounter304
- Pharaoh's claim to divinity318
- Wrath of Allah on Egyptians319
- The signs of Allah320
- The drowning of Pharaoh...328
- Pharaoh, his people, and punishment in the Hereafter338
- National degradation340
- Seclusion on Mt. Sinai344
- To see the Divine Being.....345
- Revelation of the Torah346
- Cow Worship Episode350
- Who was Samiri358
- Selection of Seventy Representatives361
- Life After Death363
- Announcement of Mercy for All364
- Israelis and Mount Sinai364
- Many Miracles367
- Promise of the Holy Land and the Children of Israel368
- Incident of Slaughtering a Cow370
- Musa ﷺ and Korah.....378
- Musa ﷺ and his Sufferings.....382
- Evaluation384
- Haroon's death.....384
- Musa ﷺ and Khizr.....385
- Death of Musa ﷺ.....392
- Characteristic Nature of the Children of Israel395
- Praise for Musa ﷺ in the Qur'an397
- A subtle point of History ...400
- Lessons402

VOLUME - II

01. HAZRAT YOUSHA'A

b. Nun ﷺ.....411

- Yousha'a in the Qur'an411
- Descent412
- Lessons416

02. HAZRAT HIZKIEL ﷺ419

- Name, Parentage and Prophethood.....419
- In the Qur'an.....419

- Escape from Jihad420
 - Jihad verses confirming the anecdote421
 - Life after death421
 - Lessons.....422
- 03. HAZRAT ILYAS ؑ425**
- Descent.....425
 - Ilyas in the Qur'an426
 - Advent.....426
 - A point in commentary427
 - Lessons.....428
- 04. HAZRAT AL-YASA ؑ431**
- Advent.....431
 - Lessons.....431
- 05. HAZRAT SHAMVEL ؑ433**
- Name and descent433
 - The Tabernacle.....437
 - Saul and Goliath
(*the battle*).....439
 - David's valour.....440
 - Evaluation of a Hebrew narrative441
 - Lessons.....443
- 06. HAZRAT DAUD ؑ447**
- Zaboor or Psalms450
 - Daud, the Qur'an and Torah.....452
 - Characteristics of Daud452
 - Recitation, hills and birds ..452
 - Iron softening in Daud's hands457
 - Birds (The Speech)459
 - Recitation of the Psalms.....459
 - Two Important Occasions..459
 - The First Occasion459
 - The Second Occasion.....460
 - An Example of Slander460
 - Biblical contradiction.....463
 - The correct version468
 - Daud's age473
 - Lessons474
- 07. HAZRAT SULEMAN ؑ479**
- Childhood480
 - David's legacy480
 - Prophethood481
 - Special virtues of Suleman 481
 - Language of birds481
 - Subjugation of winds483
 - Subjugation of Jinn and Beast484
 - The building of Jerusalem..486
 - Springs of copper488
 - The war horses489
 - Evaluation491
 - Suleman tested492
 - Evaluation495
 - Suleman's army and Valley of the Ants498

■ Suleman and the Queen of Sheba.....501	09. HAZRAT YOUNUS ؑ549
■ Problems that need to be solved508	■ Geneology.....553
■ About Sheba.....508	■ Determining the period553
■ Name of the Queen of Sheba.....509	■ Place of Mission.....554
■ The hoopoe509	■ Some Commentaries.....554
■ Throne of the queen of Sheba.....511	■ Old Testament Book Younus.....562
■ <i>Haza min fazl e Rabbi</i>515	■ Younus's death563
■ Sheba Embrasses Islam.....515	■ Younus's virtues563
■ Queen of Sheba in the Old Testament.....520	■ Virtues of all prophets.....564
■ Suleman's marriage with the queen of Sheba.....521	■ Lessons567
■ Hebrew lore.....521	10. HAZRAT ZUL-KIFL ؑ569
■ Unique greatness of Suleman's first letter522	■ Removing a Misunderstanding.....573
■ Suleman and Israeli slander523	■ Lessons573
■ Suleman's death.....528	11. HAZRAT UZAYR ؑ577
■ Lessons.....530	■ Uzayr and belief in sonship of Allah583
08. HAZRAT AYUB ؑ535	■ A reply to a suspicion583
■ Removing a misunderstanding539	■ Uzayr's blessed life.....583
■ Ayub and Hebrew and Christian Scholars539	■ Uzayr as prophet584
■ Ayub in the Quran.....540	■ Parentage.....585
■ Some Commentary Facts ...542	■ Death and tomb.....585
■ Ayub's Death546	■ Lessons585
■ Lessons.....546	12. HAZRAT ZIKRYA ؑ587
	■ Descent587
	■ Life events588
	■ Some comments.....593

13. HAZRAT YAHYA ؑ	597	■ Night of Ascension and Zikrya.....	605
■ Life.....	597	■ Yahya and the Scripture people.....	606
■ Mission.....	600	■ Lessons	607
■ Martyrdom	602	INDEX	609
■ Place of martyrdom.....	603		
■ Zikrya's death	605		



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful.

After an extensive and perspiring toil of the translators and the Publishers, the English Translation of Qasas ul Qur'an is in your hands. We are much grateful to Allah, Who granted us the honour to publish a complete and standard English Translation (with special additions e.g., pictures, index) of such an authentic and popular pedantic work.

Qasas ul Qur'an is one of the greatest works by Muhammed Hifz ur Rehman Savharvi رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ ; and perhaps there has not yet been published a book more authentic on the subject in Urdu language. One of the distinctive feature of this book is that the most decorous creed of the august scholars has been followed in it. The unseemly and feeble elucidations have been promptly retorted through strong argumentation. This book is a commentary on the holy Qur'an as well as a history of past nations. The consequences and aftermaths of the deeds of these nations have also been given in detail in order to draw the attention of human mind to the fact that the purpose of the holy Qur'an by describing these events is that we should learn a lesson from them both on individual and collective levels and then transmute our lives according to the Divine Will.

Some of the characteristic attributes of this edition are as under:-

- ◆ This is a complete translation of the original Urdu version without any addition or omission.
- ◆ Qur'anic translation has been taken from Marmaduke Pickthall's translation. So far as the Biblical references are concerned, King James Version was considered the most acceptable.
- ◆ Arabic pronunciation has been preferred for describing the names of Prophets and other personalities, however, their Biblical synonyms have also been referred occasionally for the convenience of the reader.

- ◆ The book includes an index (not present in the original Urdu version) which will certainly facilitate the reader.
- ◆ Available pictures of relevant places have also been included, which will help the reader to comprehend the concerned period. Some of these pictures are rare and are not commonly available.

It is prayed that may Allah grant His acceptance to this sincere and devoted effort of the translators and the publishers and make it appreciable among the people. It is also implored that this work may prove a device of salvation for all those who have contributed to its publication. *(Aameen)*

ASHRAF BROTHERS

Preface

to the First Urdu Edition

In the Name of Allah the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful

الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا الكتاب المبين و انزل علينا القرآن بلسان
عربي مبين وقص فيه احسن القصص موعظة وذكرى للمؤمنين
والصلاة والسلام على النبي الصادق الامين. محمد رسول الله
وخاتم النبيين وعلى آله واصحابه الذين هم هداة للمتقين.

Of the many different ways the Lord of Truth, the Highest, has chosen to guide human beings, one is the historical narration of past nations so that the present might be reminded of the consequences of good and evil deeds and, thus, to provide guidance and vision. Whole stories are not presented, but only those events, which are pertinent to the mission of truth. That is why the Qur'an offers discussion and disputation so that they may find a place in the hearts of the listeners and make their natural inclination disposed to them. This is possible only if a subject is repeated in a variety of manner with due changes of style so as to wake up dormant faculties of thought.

The stories of past nations as narrated in the Qur'an are connected with their prophets. Some other relevant events too are included which make it a priceless treasury of the struggle between truth and falsehood and the battles fought between the allies of Allah and the allies of Satan.

We cannot complain about others when there are only a few among us who seek to benefit by this treasure, the last and most perfect law of the Almighty Lord, and revive our dead with true faith, looking upon it as a perfect, everlasting code for our benefit in both the worlds. During the revelation period of the Qur'an, the Prophet ﷺ, having wearied of the idolatrous complained

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا :

"O Lord! My people have indeed made a humbug of the Qur'an."
(Surah e Furqan)

But if we do some heart-searching in this 14th century, how many are there who in spite of believing that this Book is the Word of Allah, read it with such understanding and make it a practical life-order.?

Reflecting on my own condition and that of my compatriots, I thought of translating this treasure of lessons and vision into Urdu so that it might, thus preserved, be a channel for blessings of this life and

Together with my own simplicity of style, I have sought to keep in view the following in this collection:

1. The stories presented here are only those given in the Qur'an, and they are commented upon and expatiated by authentic traditions.
2. If there has been found any difference between the old scriptures and the Qur'an, they have been explained by argument or the Qur'anic version has been proved;
3. Hebrew corruptions have been exposed in the light of true facts in particular places, the correct answers have been presented by reference to ancient authorities after discussion of commentaries, Traditions and historical references.
4. The events related to every prophet, and the chapters in which they are recorded have been given in tabular form;
5. Special light has been focussed on the guidance value under a separate sub-title.

Servant of the Millat,

Muhammed Hifz ur Rehman
Savharvi,

Rajab 22 1360 AH.

Preface to the Second Edition

The first and second parts of Qasas ul Qur'an had been completed long ago, but paper scarcity, control regulations and printing made the publishing of the second edition well nigh impossible, until events permitted it.

I had intended to bring it out after rearranging it but I was in prison in Moradabad and Bareilly jails and could not do so. Even so I decided that the whole of Moses should be included in the first part. Accordingly, all the events relating to Moses and Aaron have been presented together.

Preface to the Third Edition

After the detraction of Delhi who could have thought that *Nadawt ul Musannifeen* could be reconstructed in *Qarol Bagh*! But Allah willed that it should be so and, as in the past, He has set it on the path of service to religion once again. But because of unfavorable circumstances, in which Indian Muslims have been plunged, my old dream of presenting the volume in a new format has not been fulfilled to this day.

However, if Allah provides the courage and wherewithal, that intention may yet be accomplished in the next edition.

Muhammed Hifz ur Rehman
Savharvi,

Shaban 15 1369 AH



All or any one of these opinions may be correct. The subject is merely of polemic interest.

Satan

The command to prostrate was given to angels and Satan was not an angel. Then, why, it may be asked, was he made the object of Divine wrath? Why was he accused of disobedience?

كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ ۖ (الكهف ١٨ آيت ٥٠)

“He was of the jinn and he disobeyed.”

Satan, adoring and glorifying, was present in the assembly of angels when the command was given. Therefore, he too was the addressee of the command and he looked upon himself as such. His answer when questioned, was not that he was not one of the addressees of the command given to the angels but, out of pride, that he was superior to Adam.

The opinion that some angels are also jinn and Satan was one of them is not correct, it is not borne out by the Qur'an or any Tradition.

When Satan was accursed and turned out from paradise, how was he able to deceive Adam and Eve?

There are two opinions among the ulema. That although he was turned out, his entrance into paradise as a sinner does not negate his being accursed, It was as an accursed that he entered paradise and spoke to Adam and deceived him

إِهْبَطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا

The second opinion is that just as sound can travel over long distances by means of telephone or wireless waves, so may the whisperings and insinuations of Satan reach the human senses and influence them

فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ

Eve

How was Eve born? The words,

وَنَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا (النساء ٤ آيت ١)

“He created its pair from it”, do not convey any detail. Either of the possibilities can be correct: that Eve was created from a rib of Adam, as generally believed, and also stated in the Bible. Or that Allah created the human species by creating another species with the male to be called “Eve” and who became Adam's spouse.

Scholars prefer this latter opinion., the Qur'an, not merely stating the creation of an Eve but of womankind. That she too is a species like the male. However, Bukhari and Muslim have recorded Traditions that Eve was created from a rib of Adam.

استوصوا بالنساء فان المرأة خلقت من ضلع (الحديث)

"Treat women with tenderness and well-wishing because she was created from a rib of Adam."

Ibn Ishaq takes these words in their literal meaning. But one more critical and authoritative, Allama Qurtabi, holds that this is but a metaphorical statement meaning that woman is tender and weak and crooked like a rib. Just as the rib is used in spite of its crookedness and no attempt is made to straighten it, so should a woman be treated with tenderness and understanding. Otherwise unpleasantness and acrimony may ensue.

Where was the paradise located in which Adam lived and from which he was commanded to step down on this earth? Was it a part of paradise known as Jannat-ul Ma'wa (where the faithful will live in the Hereafter) or was it some very pleasant high ground on this very earth made for Adam's rulership? The majority of the ulema think that the paradise was Jannat-ul-Mava, promised to the Believers in the Hereafter. They try to quote the Qur'an and some Traditions in their support, e.g.

قُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ (البقره ٢ آيت ٣٥)

"We said, O Adam, live in paradise, al Jannah, you and your wife."

According to Arabic grammar, the pre-fix al supports that the paradise referred to is that famous place which has been mentioned in the Qur'an time and again as the abode of true Believers in the Hereafter. If an unfamiliar place were implied, first some description would have been given and then mentioned as a recognized one.

اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا (البقره ٢ آيت ٣٨)

"Go down all of you together"

Going down implies going from a higher place to a lower. therefore, the paradise could not be on this earth, but none other than Jannat-ul Mava.

There is a lengthy Tradition in Muslim containing the words:

يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ فَيَقُومُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حِينَ تَزْدَلِفُ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةُ فَيَأْتُونَ



The foot print on Adam's peak.
It is said that this is Hazrat Adam's foot
print When descended from heavens to earth.



According to some traditions the mother
of mankind Hazrat Eve was buried in
Jeddah (Saudi Arabia). It is said that the
name of the city Jeddah (the grandmother)
is due to the some reason.
In this picture taken in 1321 (1900 Approx.)
the dome of her tomb is visible.



Adam's peak - Sri Lanka.
According to some traditions
Hazrat Adam ؑ was
descended on earth in
Sri Lanka.

Adam's peak- another view.
Pilgrims climbing the peak to
see the foot print on the peak.



أَدَمَ فَيَقُولُونَ يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَفْتَحْ لَنَا الْجَنَّةَ فَيَقُولُ وَهَلْ أَخْرَجَكُم مِّنَ
الْجَنَّةِ إِلَّا خَطِيئَةَ أَبِيكُمْ
(الحديث)

"Allah will assemble the people. They will be standing up and paradise will be near them. Then they will come to Adam and say, O our father, open this paradise for us. But Adam will say, were you not turned out of this paradise because of a mistake of this your father?"

The ulema and they are among the eminent who hold the contrary view, argue that, according to the Qur'an, Adam and Eve dwelt here in comfort, and ate and drank, but were forbidden one tree, and Satan had free access to the place and he managed to deceive them, and they were turned out from there. These things are relevant to this earth and are not to be found in Jannat ul Mawa, where there is no pain and from which there is no going away.

Besides these two opinions there are another two, altogether four:

That the place was Jannat ul Mawa.

That there was another paradise specially prepared for Adam and Eve.

That it is best to ignore the subject and let the matter rest with Allah,

The subject is wide. Those interested should refer themselves to Hafiz Imad ud Din b. Kathir's Al Bidaya wal Nihaya.

Allah alone knows the truth but our opinion, after considering all the pros and cons is that Adam dwelt in Jannat ul Mawa¹. Eating and drinking and Satan's deceit were matters that took place when the human being had not yet been subjected to pain. All that happened was necessary for man's conduct of Allah's caliphate.

If this view be correct, the next question is: on which part of the earth did Adam and Eve set foot after their banishment from the heavens. Some weak traditions hold that the spot where Adam came was some part of the Indian subcontinent and Eve somewhere about Jeddah, the two meeting later in Arafat or Hijaz. The name Arafat is derived because the two of them met and recognised one another over here.

¹ Al Bidaya wa al Nihaya Vol. 1 pp. 75-81.

Jannat ul Khuld or Eternal Paradise, what sense would there be in Satan's telling Adam that the Forbidden Tree would bring eternal life to him, while everything there was mortal. They also add that Adam's paradise on this planet is no longer existent. The Indian Ocean once known as Qarah e Mau and destroyed by numerous earthquakes and floods finally over flooded it thousands of years ago. At that time, of the world's population about sixty million perished in the catastrophe.

The Bible states the place to have been somewhere between the Euphrates and Tigris.

Was Adam A Nabi and Rasool, Prophet and Message Bearer?

In Islamic Shariah a nabi is one whom Allah chooses from among his creatures to be in communion with Him to guide and admonish his fellowbeings. while a rasool is that nabi who is given a Book of new shariat.

As Adam was father of all humans, it is natural that he should also have been a guide for his generation in the affairs of this world. Therefore, was he also a rasool, message-bearer for well-being in the Hereafter?¹

There have never been two opinions on this subject. There is no doubt that Adam was also rasool. However, there has recently appeared some one in Egypt who argues that Adam was not a nabi because nowhere does the Qur'an describe him as such, while all other nabi are so styled.

Word for word the argument is correct, but quite wrong in the context of the qualifications of a nabi. The Qur'an does state in a number of places that Allah Himself spoke directly to Adam, giving directions of what was permissible and what forbidden, no other nabi or messenger being sent to him. The argument cannot hold water.

But the subject is of little importance. Since Adam is the first human, whatever message he stated was his shariah; therefore, he is also rasool. In any case, for mental peace and believing that Adam was also a nabi, the several Verses of the Qur'an stating the direct conversation between Adam and His Maker should be quite sufficient.

If Adam was a nabi, what does his disobedience of Allah mean? A nabi is maasoom, innocent, and innocence contradicts sin and disobedience.

It will be necessary first to be clear about the meaning of the word 'innocence' (asmat).

¹ Al Hidayah wal Nihayah Vol. 1 pp. 75-81.

Allah has created mutually contradictory powers in the human being: good and evil. He commits sin and also good deeds; his intentions can be both good and evil. This is the distinctive mark of his being honoured as a human.

From among these embodiments of good and evil powers, Allah sometimes chooses one of them to guide and teach fellow-beings. The last of such chosen ones was the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.²

When such an one is chosen for prophet-hood, it is necessary that in his intentions and deeds he should be cleansed of all sin and disobedience so that he may execute his duties properly as one installed in the position of conveying the Divine Message. He is thus a human creature, he eats and drinks and sleeps and has a family and is also pure of sin in action and intention because he is Allah's deputy to guide and lead. And although he embodies the mutually contradictory faculties, yet sin and wrong motive have been made impossible for him so that every action of his, every word, every movement and rest may be a pattern for the world. However, being human, he may forget or mistake, but should he do so he is immediately warned of it and forthwith he withdraws from such deed.

Forgetfulness we know but what is zallah, a step wrongly taken? This is just a mistake wherein there is neither arrogance, nor rebellion nor the motive to disobey; nor should the act in itself be heinous, evil, or mischievous nor unbecoming of the subject; rather light in the background of the subject's status and caliber. Yet though the error is there, it is not one, in the subject's eye, against Allah's pleasure. But because Allah's permanent security and surveillance are on His prophets, they are warned immediately that such action was not becoming their dignity and is improper. Allah's way of reacting to such error is to be stern at first and refer to it as a criminal act, but later, treat it as just an error and Himself states the excuse for it so that atheists and fire-worshippers may not dare accuse a prophet of having committed a sin.

The name for these collective virtues is 'innocence of the prophet's, a basic Islamic creed. The subject is very important, but we shall not go into further detail; whatever is stated here being sufficient for our purpose.

² Abu Dar Ghaffari tells us that he asked the Prophet sal Allah u ala hi wa sallam was Adam a nabi? He answered: 'He was both a nabi and a rasool, and he had the honour of conversing with Allah' عن أبي ذر قال قلت يا رسول الله أرايت آدم أنبياء كان قال نعم نبي رسول
أبيكم الله قبيلا

Tafsir Ibn Kathir Vol. 1 P. 34 qadeem.

Adam's Innocence

In the light of this description it should be evident that Adam's mistake was neither a sin nor disobedience but an ordinary slip of common occurrence.

فَازَلَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ

"Satan made them stumble" (al Baqar)

In Surahs A'raf and Taha, it is described as an insinuation of the devil.

فَوَسَّوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ.

"Satan whispered to him"

In another place in Surah e Taha, Adam is declared to be innocent of sin, further confirming his innocence.

وَلَقَدْ عَاهَدْنَا إِلَىٰ آدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا

"Verily, we had made a covenant with Adam, but he forgot and We did not find any constancy in him."

These Verses prove further that Adam did not sin, there was no intention to disobey, and it was but an insinuation of the devil which caused him to stumble because of his forgetting.

The following Verse from Surah e Ta'ha makes this clear:

وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ، فَغَوَىٰ

"And Adam disobeyed his Lord and he stumbled"

Here we have not taken the commonly used meaning of the words *asa* and *ghava*, "sin" and "straying away". but rather in their lexicon meaning. (Vide Lisan ul Arab and Aqrab ul Mawarid etc.)

The subject of Adam's innocence should not be taken verse by verse separately, as some critics usually do which leads them into error after error, but as a whole. And if the words referred to are taken in their common-use meaning, it should not be forgotten that Adam had the honour of being in direct conversation with the Divine Lord, and, therefore, a slight slip, too, in his case deserved a reprimand, although for other good people, such stumbling may be as nothing.

Was Adam the first human being known to the universe, or have there been other humans before him; another father of similar human beings? Some scholars have tried to show that there was some thirty-thousand years before our Adam another similar species which had nothing to do with ours and was

destroyed, The name of that species of humans was 'Tayanadarltal'. But this suggestion is not scientific. It is entirely imaginative. based, however, on the discovery of some skeletons. The Qur'an gives us no information about them, not even any indication., nor has our Prophet ﷺ ever mentioned them.

Islam advises us to accept all discoveries which are proved and the Qur'an, does not deny them. Non-acceptance of them would only be prejudice and narrow-mindedness. Unproven discoveries should not be accepted as facts. We should await the time when they might come to be proved. Mere polemic arguments change their stance from time to time, but Qur'anic knowledge never changes. And whenever conjectures have been scientifically proved, they have never been able to go beyond what Qur'anic knowledge has already stated.

Should any commentator interpret a Verse to contradict the essence of this problem, it should be ignored because such is the Qur'an's own demand. The Qur'an again and again uses such words as,

أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ، أَفَلَا تَتَدَبَّرُونَ، أَفَلَا يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

It should, however, be kept in mind that this discussion applies only to historical and geographical subjects, or those pertaining to nature. The Qur'an refers to them only in so far tthey may help its guidance value. As far as those subjects are concerned which relate to faith and Islamic deeds, --- a Muslim being a Believer,--- there is not the least scope in them for alteration. They do not stand in need of any research or investigation. For instance, Allah's Being, the Hereafter, angels, fate, prophets and Divine messengers, prayers, faith, zaka't, Hajj and their implications and meaning. Knowledge of them is based in Divine inspiration, the guidance derived from which is absolute and unchangeable.

What is the Qur'anic command in respect of Adam's story as mentioned in the Bible, for instance, the snake and peacock, and such, which are not mentioned in the Qur'an?

These are known as *Israiliyat* and are not founded in truth. They are not authenticated by wisdom, history or Divine inspiration and are entirely fabricated. They mislead some scholars. They should not be even mentioned in the commentaries of the Qur'an.

References are made in the Qur'an to angels and jinn in connection with the story of Adam and Eve. Are they two different creations or are they just names of two different powers, one angelic and the other satanic?

Angels

The sum total of what the Qur'an tells us about angels is that we can neither see them nor are we given any deep knowledge about them, but that we must believe in their existence and look upon them as permanent creation. So much only is their description for us. Some of them have been mentioned by name.

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلٰى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

(بقره ٢ آيت ٩٧)

"Say: Who is an enemy to Gabriel! For he it is who hath revealed (this Scripture) to thy heart by Allah's leave." (Al-Baqar)

مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَدُوٌّ لِّلْكَافِرِينَ

(بقره ٢ آيت ٩٨)

'Who is an enemy to Allah and His angels and His messengers , and Gabriel and Michael! Then lo! Allah (himself) is an enemy to the disbelievers."

(Al-Baqar 2 Verse 98)

يُنزِّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلٰى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

(النحل ١٦ آيت ٢)

"He sendeth down the angels with the Spirit of His command unto whom He will of his bondsmen."

(Al-Nahal 12 Verse 2)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولِي
أَجْنِحَةٍ مَّثْنٰى وَثُلثَ وَرُبْعَ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

(فاطر ٣٥ آيت ١)

"Praise be to Allah , the Creator of the heavens and the earth , Who appointeth angels as messengers having wings, two, three and four. He multiplieth in creation what He willeth. Lo!. Allah is able to do all things."

(al Faatir 35 Verse 1)

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ (معارج ٧٠ آیت ٤)

"Presented before Him will be the angels and the Spirit"
(Mu'aarij 70 Verse 4)

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَى أَرْجَائِهَا وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَنِيَّةٌ (١)

(الحاقة ٦٩ آیت ١٧)

"And the angels will be on the sides thereof and eight will uphold the Throne of their Lord that day, above them"

(al Haaqa 69 Verse 17)

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ

فِيهَا مَنْ يَفْسِدُ فِيهَا (بقرة ٢٠ آیت ٣٠)

"And when thy Lord said unto the angels, Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said, Wilt Thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood?"

(al Baqar 20 Verse 30)

The Qur'an mentions the angels eighty-eight times:

Surah No.	Surah Name	Verses number
2	Baqar	30, 31, 34, 98, 102, 161, 177, 210, 248, 285
3	Aal e Imran	18, 39, 42, 45, 80, 87, 124, 125
4	al Nisa	97, 136, 166, 172
6	al an-Aam	8, 9, 50, 93, 111, 158
7	Al Aaraf	11, 20
8	al Anfal	9, 12, 50
11	Hudd	12, 31
12	Yusuf	31
13	al Ra'd	13, 23
15	al Hajar	7, 8, 28, 30
16	al Nahal	2, 28, 32, 33, 49

17	al Asra	40, 61, 92, 95
18	al Kahf	50
20	Tahā	116
21	al Anbiya	103
22	al Hajj	75
23	al Momineen	24
25	al Furqan	7, 21, 22, 25
32	al Sajida	11
33	al Ahzab	43, 56
34	Saba	40
35	Faatir	1
37	al Safaat	150
38	Sa'ad	71, 73
39	al Zumur	75
41	Fusilat	14
42	al Shura	5
43	Zukhruf	19, 53, 60
47	Muhammed	27
53	al Najm	26, 27
66	al Tahreem	4, 6
69	al Haqa	17
70	al Mu-aarij	4
74	al Mudassar	31
78	al Naba	38
79	al Fajar	22
97	al Qadar	4

Besides, in other sacred Books, such as those of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, angels are mentioned as a separate creation. There are numerous instances mentioned of them in Bukhari and Muslim.

Jinn

Similarly, Jinn too are a creation of Allah on High, of the reality of which too we know very little, They do not appear to us as other ordinary creatures do. We can only believe what the Qur'an tells us: that they exist and, like us humans, are one of the creation. They are bound by a shariah, they also reproduce, and among them, too, are good and bad alike.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الذاريات ٥١ آيت ٥٦)

"And I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me."
(al Zurriyat 51 Verse 56)

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا
عَجَبًا يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ ۗ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا

(جن ٧٢ آيت ١, ٢)

"Say, (O Mohammed) It is revealed unto me that a company of the jinn gave ear, and they said, Lo! it is a marvelous Qur'an which guideth righteousness, so we believe in it and we ascribe no partner unto our Lord" (Jinn 72 Verse 1, 2)

وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَمِنَ الْقَاسِطُونَ (جن ٧٢ آيت ١٤)

"And among us there are righteous folk and among us there are far from that."
(Jinn 72 Verse 14)

إِنَّهُ يَرَلَكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ (اعراف ٧ آيت ٢٧)

"Verily, Satan and his minions keep watching you from here and there, and you cannot see them." (Aaraf 7 Verse 27)

كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ (الكهف ١٨ آيت ٥٠)

"And Satan was of the Jinn. Lo! he disobeyed his Lord's command,"
(al Baqar 18 Verse 50)

We learn from such Verses that Satan was of the species of jinn, and he confessed before Allah that he had been created out of fire. The word jinn or jinns occurs in the Qur'an thirty-eight times in 21 Verses, as follows:

<i>Surah No.</i>	<i>Surah Name</i>	<i>Verses No</i>
6	<i>al An-am</i>	100, 112, 128, 130
7	<i>al A'raff</i>	38, 179
11	<i>Hudd</i>	119
15	<i>al Hajar</i>	27
17	<i>al Asra</i>	88
18	<i>al Kahf</i>	50
27	<i>al Namal</i>	17, 39
32	<i>al Sajida</i>	13
34	<i>al Saba</i>	12, 14, 41
37	<i>al Safatat</i>	158
41	<i>Fussilat</i>	25, 29
46	<i>al Ahqaaf</i>	18, 29
51	<i>al Zurriyat</i>	56
55	<i>al Rehman</i>	15, 33, 39, 56, 74
72	<i>al Jinn</i>	1, 5, 6
114	<i>al Naam</i>	6

To conclude: The Qur'an and its Prophets have informed us that although angels and jinn are hidden from our eyes, they are creations that exist. It is possible for us to be mistaken by what we see but there is no possibility of error in what is Divinely inspired and what the Prophet is informed about. Therefore, we believe in jinns and angels as such. From the purely intellectual consideration, too, their existence is not impossible.

So to deny what is not impossible to the intellect and is asserted by Divine inspiration is to deny knowledge and truth and is a sign of sheer obstinacy. Centuries ago we were not able to see or be certain about very distant objects but today, with the aid of telescope and such, we can both see and feel; them. At that time, was the denial of their existence based on knowledge or was it lack of the implements of knowledge and sufficient research? Similarly, today we are ignorant of the real nature of electricity, light and magnetism but we know them by their effects.

Denial by atheists and materialists is not based on knowledge or faith but on want of knowledge due to their lack of sensation and visual evidence or

observation. This cannot be an argument for non-existence of what is denied. Knowledge is obtainable only by two means; through the arts and sciences, which depend on labour, and the other as a Divine gift, the highest phase of which is Divine inspiration. Thus if we cannot find out something by way of acquired knowledge, but the intellect does not admit its impossibility, while Divine inspiration proclaims its existence, we should accept it as such, admitting the incapacity of the arts and sciences. If, however, one denies the very fact of Divine inspiration, one should study the arguments presented by the Qur'an to the end that it is without the least doubt of Divine inspiration.

Important Lessons from Adam's Story

We shall here mention only some of the many lessons contained in Adam's story. All of them cannot possibly be stated here.

Innumerable is the secrets of Allah's wisdom and no one, howsoever close to Him, can possibly have knowledge of all of them. The angels who are the closest, could not understand the wisdom underlying man's creation and they remained in ignorance and wonderment until they were informed.

The most humble of things can be exalted to the highest status, honoured and glorious, if Allah turns to it with His grace. Consider a lump of clay and then its rise to become Allah's caliph and prophet! Such exaltation is not a chance accident but a result of wise planning, always according to its capacity, a well organised order.

Although the human being was endowed with all manner of greatness and glory, his inherent weaknesses remained. This is what caused forgetfulness to overpower Adam and be influenced by Satan's insinuation.

Should, in spite of an error, a human being's heart feel ashamed and wish to repent, the gates of mercy are not closed on him, he need not despair, But sincerity and truth are requisites. And just as Hadret Adam was forgiven in Allah's magnanimity, so may all of his children find a place in the same grace.

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْا عَلٰى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوْا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ
 اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ

(الزمر ٣٩ آيت ٥٣)

"Say, O My slaves who have been prodigal to their own hurt!, Despair not of the mercy of Allah who forgiveth all sins. Lo! He is the forgiving, the Merciful!" (al Zumur)

Arrogance and rebellion in the presence of Allah destroy every greatness or goodness and become a cause for lasting humility and loss. Satan's example is full of lessons for us. He had served and worshipped Allah for thousands of years, yet how terrible was the fate he came to as a result of his rebellion and impudence!

فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ

"Take a lesson, O people of Vision"

Cain and Abel

The story of Cain and Abel is given here because it is a part of the story of Adam. These two sons of Adam are not mentioned in the Qur'an by name but referred to only as ibn-e-Adam, Adam's son/s. We have taken the names here from the Old Testament.

Hafiz Imaduddin bin Kathir has quoted in his history a Tradition on the authority of *Suddi* from Abdullah b. Masud radi Allah-u Ta'la an-hu and other Companions, which states, "To increase the population of the world of human beings it was necessary for Hadret Adam, peace be on him, to marry the twins born of Eve at one time with the twins born of her a second time. When the time of the marriage of Cain and Abel came, and Abel was the younger of the two Cain disliked the idea of Abel marrying his twin sister and he marrying Abel's, because the latter's was not as good-looking as his twin sister.

"To resolve the matter, Adam proposed that the two offer sacrifices to the Almighty Lord and he whose sacrifice was accepted would have the right to his wish being carried out. It appears from the Old Testament that the custom at that time was to place the sacrificial object on high ground and a fire from the heavens would descend and consume the accepted sacrifice. Abel selected the best sheep from his flock for sacrifice while Cain chose the worst part of his harvest from his field for sacrifice, This alone shows the comparative purity of the heart of each of the two. The heavenly fire consumed Abel's sacrifice in token of the Divine acceptance. This infuriated Cain and he told Abel that he would kill him to prevent him from fulfilling his desire. Abel replied that he would not fight back to kill Cain and that Allah accepts the motive, and with Him anger was of no avail. This further enraged Cain who fell upon Abel and killed him."

The Qur'an does not mention the marriage part of the story but only the sacrifice, with the addition of the burial problem.

Cain was at a loss to think out a way for disposing of Abel's body, for, so far there had not been any death in Adam's lineage, so that Adam had not yet given any instruction to that end. While Cain was yet wondering, a raven came down and began scratching the earth with its beak. Seeing this, Cain felt greatly humbled, saying to himself that he did not even possess the sense, which this bird had. He now realized what he should be doing and quickly dug up the earth and buried Abel in the pit.

(In another version, we are told that the raven buried a dead raven after scratching the earth).

وَأْتَلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقْبَلُ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا
وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ
الْمُتَّقِينَ (١) لَئِن بَسَطْتَ إِلَىَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ
لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢) إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَبُوءَ بِإِثْمِي وَ
إِثْمِكَ فَتَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ (٣) فَطَوَّعَتْ
لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الخَاسِرِينَ (٤) فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ
غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ كَيْفَ يُورِثُ سَوَاءَ أَخِيهِ قَالَ يُورِثُهُ
أَعْجَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ فَأُورِثُ سَوَاءَ أَخِي فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ
النَّادِمِينَ (٥) مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ
نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا
وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا (٦)

(المائدة ٥ آيت ٢٧-٣٢)

"But recite unto them with truth the tale of the two sons of Adam, how they offered each a sacrifice, and it was accepted from the one of them and it was not accepted from the other. (The one) said, I would surely kill thee.

(The other) answered: Allah accepteth only from those who ward off (evil). Even if thou stretch out thy hand to kill me, I shall not stretch out my hand to kill thee. Lo! I fear Allah,

the Lord of the Worlds! Lo! I would rather thou shouldst bear the punishment of the sin against me and thy own sin and become of the owners of the Fire. That is the reward of evil doers. But (the other's) mind imposed on him the killing of his brother, so he slew him and became one of the losers.

Then Allah sent a raven scratching up the ground to show him how to hide his brother's naked corpse. He said, Woe unto me! Am I not able to be as this raven and so hide my brother's naked corpse? And he became repentant. For that cause, We decreed for the Children of Israel that whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoso saveth the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind." (Al-Maa-i-da 5 Verse 27-32)

Imam Ahmed records a Tradition from Abdullah b. Masud radi Allah-u Ta'la an-hu, reporting:

"Whenever some one murders wrongfully, his sin falls on Adam's first son, (Cain), because it was he who was the first to commit an unlawful murder (and set a precedence for the crime)."

To the north of Damascus there is a memorial bearing the inscription 'Abel's Murder. Spot. Ibn Asakir, in his work on Ibn Kathir, reports a dream of Ibn Kathir in which he saw the Prophet ﷺ, standing with Abel who said on oath that this was where he was slain, and the Prophet confirmed.

The Lesson

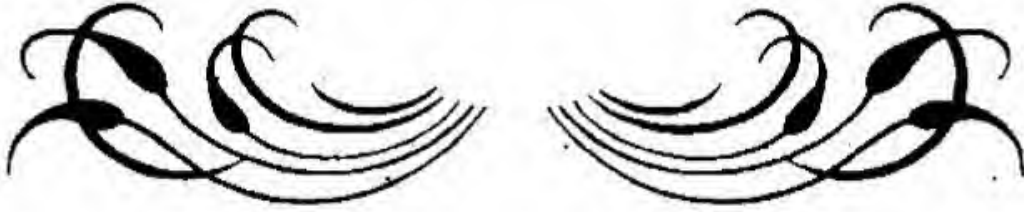
From the last quoted Verses from Surah e Ma'idah and the Tradition just quoted we learn that no one should ever set precedence for a sin for others to copy and follow. Whoever makes such innovation shall be condemned and looked down upon forever as its founder. To sin is bad enough but to set the pattern for a sin deserves everlasting torment!

Abel was an accepted one of Allah and Cain was a down trone. It was, therefore, necessary that Abel's sacred body should not be disrespected and that to perpetuate the honour of Adam's lineage, the burial-after-death tradition should be established. It was also necessary that Cain should be humiliated for his misdeed and be made to feel the guilt of his crime, as well as be conscious of his lack of even so much sense as was possessed by such a common bird as a raven.

يَوَيْلَتُ أَعْجَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ

"O woe unto me! Am I not able to be even as this raven?"

Note: Historians usually narrate Hazrat Idrees before Noah, but overlooking them, in the next chapter we give Noah before Idrees. However, those readers who prefer reading Idrees before Noah may do so by skipping the next few pages and returning to them after they have finished with Idrees.



Nooh in Qur'an

It is in the style of the Qur'an that when it refers to historical events it does so only to advise, sermonize and warn. Its arguments and details are also for the same end. Nooh is mentioned here forty-three times but to the same purpose.

<i>Surah</i>	<i>Verse</i>
Al Imran	23
Al Nisa	163
Al An-aam	84
Aaraaf	59, 66
Al Tauba	70
Yunus	71
Houd	25, 32, 36, 42, 45, 46, 48, 89
Ibrahim	9
Al Asra	3, 17
Maryam	58
Al Anbiya	76
Al Haj	42
Al Mominoon	23
Al Furqan	37
Al Sho-a-rah	105, 106, 116
Al Ankaboot	14
Ahzab	7
Al Safaat	75, 79
Sa`ad	12
Ghafir	5, 31
Al Shura	13
Qaf	12
Al Zaariyaat	46
Al Najm	52
Al Qamar	9
Al Hadeed	26
Al Tahreem	10
Nooh	1, 21, 26

However, the details are given only in A'araaf, Houd, Mominoon, Sho-a-rah, Qamar and Nooh. Long before Nooh's advent, the people had gone astray from true religion and from the One True Allah and had become idolators. According to Allah's law, someone had to rise from among themselves, a prophet, for their guidance.

Nooh called his people to the truth, the right religion but they paid no heed to him. They denied him with contempt and hatred. The well to do and their leaders left no stone unturned to affront him and their followers tried every way to do the same. They wondered that one who was not a wealthy man or esteemed as one of high status, or an angel, should dare aspire to lead them or advise them to abide by his commands. Seeing the poor who did respond to his call, they would say, "We are not like these wretches that we should obey you and esteem you as our leader." They thought that those who followed him were blind and incapable forming a correct opinion. If, sometimes, they did relent, they would ask Nooh to get rid of the 'wretches' around him because they smelt and they could not sit together in the same place.

Nooh had only one answer to their demand, that this could never be done. 'These wretches' were sincere worshippers of Allah, he would tell them. If he were to do as they desired, he would have no refuge from Allah; for he was afraid of Allah; for with Allah, purity of heart alone mattered; being rich or poor made no difference with him. He would tell them that he had come only to convey Allah's message to them; that he claimed no knowledge of the unseen, nor that he was an angel. He would tell them that Allah's blessings are not subject to outward wealth and splendor; that attaining guidance and blessings was not influenced by the glitter of worldly wealth, but depended upon self abnegation, Allah's pleasure, contentment, purity of motive and deed.

Nooh would also tell them that he desired no compensation from them for his guidance, invitation and mission, because Allah alone was his compensatory and He was the best of appraisers! Surah e Houd is a repository of these counsels and arguments.

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا نَرُكَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِثْلَنَا وَمَا نَرُكَ
 اتَّبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِآدِنَا بِأَدْيِ الرَّأْيِ وَمَا نَرُكَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ
 فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ () قَالَ يَقَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ
 رَبِّي وَآتَيْتُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنُلْزِمُكُمْوهَا وَأَنْتُمْ لَهَا
 كَارِهُونَ () وَيَقَوْمِ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا

أَنَا بَطَّارِدٍ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُلْقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَكُم قَوْمًا
تَجْهَلُونَ () وَيَقَوْمٍ مَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ طَرَدْتُهُمْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ()
وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي
مَلَكٌ وَلَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ
بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ()

"The chieftains of his folk who disbelieved said: see thee but a mortal likes and we see not that any follow these the most abject among us. without reflection. We behold in you no merit above us. Nay we deem you liars."

He said: O my people! Bethink you, if I rely on a clear proof from my Lord and there hath come unto me a mercy from His presence, and it hath been made obscure to you, can we compel you to accept it when you are averse thereto? And O my people! I ask you no wealth therefor. My reward is the concern only of Allah, and I am not going to thrust away those who believe --- Lo! they have to meet their Lord -- but I see you a fool that are ignorant.

And O my people! who would deliver me from Allah if I thrust them away? Will you not then reflect?

I say not unto you that I have the treasures of Allah, nor I have knowledge of the Unseen. Nor say I unto those whom your scores scorn that Allah will not give them good --- Allah knoweth best what is in their hearts --- Lo! then I should be of the wrong-doers." (Hud 27-31)

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ () قَالَ يَقَوْمِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ () أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ
وَاطِيعُونَ () يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُخْرِجْكُمْ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى. إِنَّ
أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ () قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي
دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا () فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَايَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا () وَإِنِّي
كَلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِيُغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أُصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَاسْتَعْتَبُوا

يَا بَهُمْ وَأَصْرُوا وَاسْتَكْبِرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا () ثُمَّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا ()
 ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْلَنْتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا () فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ
 إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا () (نوح)

Lo! We sent Nooh unto his people (saying) Warn thy people ere the painful doom come unto them. He said . O my people! Lo! I am a plain warner unto you! (Bidding you) Serve Allah, and keep your duty unto Him and obey me that He may forgive you somewhat of your sins and respite you to an appointed term. Lo! the term of Allah, when it cometh, cannot be delayed, if ye but know.

He said: My Lord! Lo! I have called unto my people night and day; but all my calling doth but add to their repugnance. And lo! whenever I call unto them that Thou mayest pardon them, they thrust their fingers in their ears, and cover themselves with their garments and persist (in their refusal) and magnify themselves in pride. And lo! I have called unto them aloud; and Lo! I have made public proclamation unto them, and I have appealed to them in private.; And I have said, Seek pardon of your Lord. Lo He is ever forgiving. " (Nooh 1-10)

وَقَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ
 وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا () (نوح)

"And they have said. Forsake not your gods. Forsake not Wadd, nor Suwa Yaguth and Yauq and Nasr. Nooh 23

Finally, they found no alternative but to tell Nooh:

قَالُوا يَا نُوحُ قَدْ جَادَلْتَنَا فَأَكْثَرْتَ جِدَالَنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ
 مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ()

"They said, O Nooh, thou hast disputed with us and multiplied disputation with us ; now bring upon us that wherewith thou threatenest us, if thou art of the truthful. "

Nooh replied to them::

قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ إِنْ شَاءَ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ (هود)

"He said. Only Allah will bring it upon you, if He will, and ye can in wise escape." (Houd 3)

When Nooh despaired and after nine-hundred-and-fifty years of preaching, according to the Qur'an, he was convinced that his words had no effect on them, he was sad and prayed Allah for solace.

وَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ نُوحٍ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ آمَنَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ () (هود)

"And it was inspired in Nooh (saying) . No one of thy folk will believe save him who hath believed already. Be not distressed because of what they do." (Hud 34)

Now when Nooh was convinced that there had been no laxity in his mission, he prayed:

رَبِّ لَّا تَذَرْنَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا () إِنَّكَ إِنْ تَذَرَهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا () (نوح)

"My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers in the land. If Thou shouldn't leave them, they will mislead Thy slaves and will beget none save lewd disbelievers." (Nooh 26,27)

Reason of Ark

Allah heard Nooh's prayer and, in line with his law of deed and consequence, declared his punishment for the disobedient. Nooh was commanded to build an ark in order to save him and those who believed with him. When Nooh started to build the ark, the unbelievers scoffed at him, and whenever they passed his way, would taunt him: 'So when we are drowning, you and your disciples will find safety on it !' Seeing their audacity, Nooh would reply with the like of their own words.

وَأَصْنَعِ الْفُلَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُغْرَقُونَ () (هود)

"O Nooh, build the ship under Our eyes and by Our inspiration, and speak not unto Me on behalf of those who do wrong. Lo! they will be drowned." (Houd 37)

At last Nooh's Ark was completed, and Nooh, seeing the first sign of the coming punishment, namely, the gushing forth of water springs from the earth, instructed his family and those a few who believed, about forty of them, to board the ark, and also made a pair of each living thing to go on it.

When this was done according to Divine inspiration, the skies were commanded to rain and the springs to rise with full force. The ark floated in safety while the accursed were all drowned, going to their fate according to their misdeeds.

Son of Nooh:

One event in this connection is noteworthy. Nooh prayed Allah that his son be saved but Allah forbade Nooh to pray for him. This is an important point.

وَنَادَى نُوحٌ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ
وَأَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَكَمِينَ () قَالَ يُنوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ
غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ
الْجَاهِلِينَ () قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ
وَالأ تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي أَكُنْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ () قِيلَ يُنوحُ اهْبِطْ
بِسَلَامٍ مِّنَّا وَبَرَكَاتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى أُمَمٍ مِّمَّنْ مَعَكَ () (هود)

"And Nooh cried unto his Lord and said, My Lord! Lo! My son is of my household! Surely Thy promise is the truth and Thou art the Most Just of Judges!

"He said, O Nooh! Lo! he is not of thy household; lo! he is of evil conduct! So ask not of Me that whereof thou hast no knowledge. I admonish thee lest thou be among the ignorant.

"He said, My Lord! Lo! I seek refuge (from the sin) that I should ask of Thee that whereof I have no knowledge unless Thou forgive me and have mercy on me I shall be among the lost.

"It was said (unto him) O Nooh! Go thou down (from the mountain) with peace from Us and blessings upon thee and some nations (that will spring) from those with thee. (There will be other) nations unto whom We shall give enjoyment a long while and then a painful doom from Us will overtake them."

(Hud 45-48)

It appears from these Verses that Allah had promised Nooh to save his family, and that is why Nooh prayed Him that his son might be saved, but Allah told him rather sternly that he should not ask for of which he had no knowledge. Nooh accepted his mistake and asked Allah for His forgiveness and mercy, and, in turn, received a desired response.

Now, was the promise made to Nooh fulfilled, how did Nooh misunderstand the promise, and how, after a slight rebuke, did Nooh understand?

The following Verse may be considered in reply to these questions.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ
 اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ آمَنَ وَمَا آمَنَ
 مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ (٤٠)

"(Thus it was) till when Our commandment came to pass and the oven gushed forth water. We said, load therein two of every kind, a pair (the male and female) and thy household save him against whom the word hath gone forth already, and those who believe. And but a few were they who believed with him!" (Houd 40)

This Verse shows that Allah had told Nooh to take his kin to board the ark prepared for those meriting salvation, but not all of them merited salvation; for some of them the punishment command had already been given.

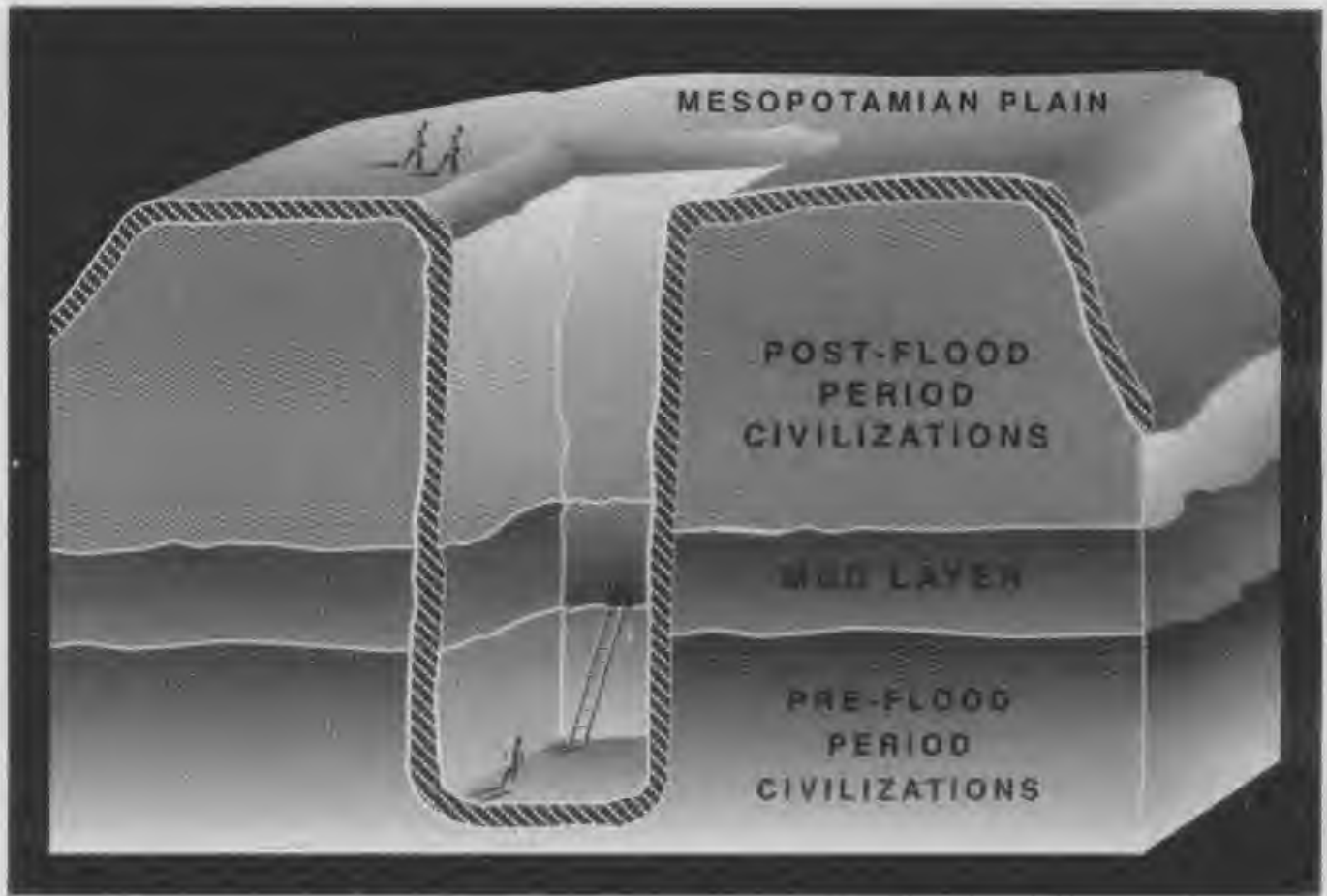
Nooh was despaired of his wife for not converting to the faith of believing in the One True Allah, but out of his paternal love for his son, Canaan, he thought that the young man would benefit in the company of those around him on the ark and repent, shedding over the bad influences. Taking advantage of the words *ahla-ka* "thy kin", he begged that his son be saved. Allah did not approve of His prophet's conjecture, and with a slight rebuke told him that it was not becoming of one always under Divine inspiration to draw conclusions without due patience. Allah's promise was only for the believers. Canaan was and would always remain an unbeliever. Not that Allah was enraptured but that He called Nooh to recognize the fact and Nooh having heard admitted his human weakness and sought forgiveness. And so, was successful and safe with Allah's blessings. His supplication was neither sin nor negative of prophetic innocence, and Allah took it for lack of knowledge.

Nooh understood that salvation does not depend on blood relation or family ties but only on faith in Allah. In compliance with his missionary duty, he now called on his son to repent even at this last stage but the accursed youth replied:

FLOOD REGION



According to archaeological finds, Nuh's Flood took place on the Mesopotamian plains. The plains had a different shape then. In the above diagram, the current borders of the plains are denoted with a red cut line. The large section lying behind the red line is known to have been a part of the sea at that time.



The excavations made by Sir Leonard Woolley in the Mesopotamian plains disclosed the presence of a mud-clay layer 2.5 m. deep in the earth. This mud-clay layer was most probably formed by the clay masses carried by the flood waters and, in the whole world, it only exists under the Mesopotamian plains. This discovery became an important piece of evidence proving that the Flood had only occurred on the Mesopotamian plains.

قَالَ سَأُوۡىٓ اِلٰى جَبَلٍ يَّغۡصِيۡنِيۡ مِنَ الْمَآءِ (١) (هود)

"He said, I shall betake me to some high mountain that will save me from the water." (Houd)

Nooh said:

قَالَ لَا غَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ ۗ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُهْرَقِيۡنَ (١) (هود)

"This day there is none that saveth from the commandment of Allah save him on whom He hath had mercy. And the wave came in between them, so he was among the drowned." (Houd 43)

Mount Judi

When Allah's punishment was fully wreaked the ark came to rest by Mount Judi.

وَقُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ وَاَسْتَوَتْ عَلٰى الْجُوۡدِيِّ وَقِيلَ بُعۡدًا لِّلْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ (١)

(هود)

"And the commandment was fulfilled. And it (the ship) came to rest upon (the mount) Al Judi and it was said: A far removal for wrong doing folk." (Houd)

The Old Testament refers to Judi as one of the Ararat hills. Ararat is in fact the name of an island between the Tigris and the Euphrates and extends from the Bakar wastes as far as Baghdad.

The waters began gradually to dry up and the inmates of the ark stepped on dry land once more. For this Nooh has been titled as "Second father of humanity", and probably, because of this, in the Traditions, he has been called The First Rasool

Although details of the event conclude here, some questions of polemic and intellectual interest arise. Was Nooh's Deluge confined to some particular part of the earth or did it extend over the whole earth?

A number of Muslim and Hebrew scholars, as well as astronomers and experts of other fields of knowledge believe that the Deluge did not extend beyond the area, about 140,000 square kilometers, where Nooh and his people lived. The reason they advance is that if the Deluge were global its effects

should have been found on mountain tops and other places. Besides, the world's population upto that time was very small and could not had been spread beyond where Nooh and his people lived. Therefore, they alone deserved the punishment.

Other Muslim scholars, astronomers and scientists believe that the Deluge was global and that not only was there one deluge but that this earth had been visited by many similar catastrophes. They also aver in answer that besides the territory of Arab Iraq, skeletons have been found on hill-tops of creatures that can live only in water. Therefore, some time or the other the waters must have risen so high as to carry water-life to great heights.

After reflecting on both opinions it has been considered by researchers that the Deluge was limited, not global, one. And it is also held that all humans today are of Nooh's lineage. The following verse also indicates the same:

إِنَّ تَذَرَهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ

The Qur'an has dwelt only on those parts of the event which carry admonition, and has nothing to do with other details, leaving them to human research for social progress. It tells us that thousands of years ago, people disobeyed Allah and denied His prophet sent to them, in consequence of which Divine Power vindicated itself and destroyed them by drowning, and saved those few who believed.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

Was Canaan Nooh's own son? Some scholars hold that he was born to Noha's wife by her first marriage and was brought up by Nooh after he married her; others accuse her of adultery. Both think it very strange that a prophet's son should be a denier of his father's message.

But why do these ulema forget that Abraham's father remained a denier all his life. And if the unbelief of a pagan father does not reflect on his prophet-son's glorious status, how can the unbelief of a pagan son detract from his father's? The truth is that such a fact is a manifestation of the power of the Lord and Creator of the Universe Allah! He creates roses from barren ground, and thorns in their stems and branches.

فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

There is no need, however, for conjecture and argument, when the Qur'an has clearly stated that Canaan was Nooh's son,

A Moral Issue

Although Allama Abdul Wahab Najjar accepts the Qur'anic explanation, he believes that since, according to the Qur'an, Nooh's wife was an unbeliever, to accuse her of immorality is not improper.

I have always disagreed with such ulema. They do not appreciate the delicacy of moral issues in connection with the prophets, which are so telling on civilized social life. Unbelief is worse than adultery. How can it be that a Prophet, who is always in communion with Divine inspiration, should remain ignorant of his wife's character. Such ignorance is possible with common people, but not with a prophet. A prophet is sent to guide, improve and warn; he is innocent of sin and so pure that none can find fault with his society, morals or family lineage. How, then, can it be possible that there should be immorality in his house and he remains indifferent to it?

We have Hazrat Ayesha's example before us. All manner of things were said by gossip mongers, which also came to the ears of the Prophet ﷺ. But within a few days which were a trial for the miscreants, Divine inspiration cleared the matter.

It is possible for the wife of a prophet to commit a lewd sin because, unlike her husband she is not innocent, but it is not possible that she should continue to remain his wife, and Divine inspiration and the prophet remain ignorant of her misdeed.

Unbelief is the greatest of sins but in common parlance it is not lewdness; it is want of faith; that is why in previous shariah and in our own Prophet's life in Makkah, marriage with an unbelieving woman was permissible, but during the Medina period the Qur'an forever forbade marriage between a believer and a non-believer. But adultery was never permissible.

In the case of Nooh's wife any question of comparing adultery with unbelief does not arise. It is simply one of social good deeds and bad deeds. Therefore, companionship of a prophet's pure life with an adulterous wife was impossible. If Nooh's wife had even once committed the foul deed, Divine inspiration would immediately have apprised him, and there would either have been a separation or the matter concluded by the woman's repentance. Neither the Qur'an, nor any Tradition, insinuates any such accusation. Unnecessary interpretations can only impress hypercritical and antagonistic minds and benefit none. Canaan was Nooh's son but his upbringing in his non-believing mother's lap and society prevented him from accepting the prophet's mission.

(The name Canaan is taken from the Old Testament, The Qur'an considers it unnecessary to mention the name).

A prophet's duty is only to preach and warn, not to force himself on his relatives, tribe or nation and change their hearts

لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ (غاشيه)

"Thou art not at all a warder over them" (Ghashiah 22)

وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ (ق)

"Thou canst not force them (to accept)" (Qaf)

The great Deluge is a fact of history but whether it spread all over the earth or only a part of it is immaterial. It is mentioned in the Old Testament as well as some ancient Hindu religious books. Although there are some minor differences of narration, Syed Abu Nasr Ahmed Husain Bhopali has dealt with the subject in detail in his book Tarikh ul Adab ul Hindi under the subtitle Brahmana Dad Ba-Nesha-a where Nooh is pronounced Ma-Nu. The meaning is said to be "Allah's son" or "Father of the human species".

The Qur'an states that Nooh preached his mission for 950 years.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا
خَمْسِينَ عَامًا (عنكبوت)

"And verily We sent Nooh (as Our messenger) unto his folk, and he continued with them for a thousand years save fifty years" (Ankabut 14)

Such a long age seem to be rather far fetched but is not an impossibility because in those days the mental anxieties and diseases which have been created by civilization over the milleniums were absent. Ancient history also confirms that the age ratio was very great compared with ours today. Nooh's age is one of these exceptions which in the case of Prophets are styled as *Muheet e Ilahai* and *Ayat-ul-Lah*, the wisdom of which is known only to Allah.

The Qur'an has not stated the duration of a prophet's mission with such emphasis as that of Nooh. Historically there are proofs of the exceptionally long ages of human beings, and should be taken as such. And if the historical evidence is looked upon as untrue to facts, it should be taken as a gift of Allah in the circumstances of the time, a gift related to the wisdom of prophetic mission. This is the correct approach and there is no need to force interpretations to reduce Nooh's age, and such

The famous poet Abul Ula Mu'arri tells us in his verses that in ancient times people used the word 'year' to indicate 'month'. Accordingly, some historians

calculate that Nooh's age does not exceed 150 years and missionary period eighty-years.

But this is not correct. Abul Ula's words may be true of some unknown calculation system but we do not find that at the time of Qur'anic revelations any Arab tribe used the word 'year' to mean a 'month'. Abul Ula cannot be referred to for interpreting the Qur'anic verse.

Moreover, it should be noted that the Qur'an does not go into minor details unless there is great necessity for them, and it mentions the period of Nooh's mission with special emphasis.

Some commentators refer to Hebrew sceptors where it is stated that forty years before the Deluge, Allah made all women barren. These words are no more than mere talk, probably forged to show that innocent infants were not made victims of the Deluge. Such commentators seem to be ignorant of the meaning of '*sunnat ul-Lah*' or Allah's law, otherwise they would not make references to such Hebrew innovations.

Whenever calamities come in this world, whether as punishment from above or due to some visible cause, they affect everyone alike, the good and the evil, criminal or innocent, saint and sinner. No distinction is made in this world. Distinctions are left for disposal in the Hereafter.

However, we should not forget that when punishment comes as a result of persistent disobedience of a prophet's admonition, he is informed of it by Divine inspiration so that he may announce the impending calamity and in time save himself and those who follow him.

The support from Hebrew authority which some commentators have sought for their argument is wholly unnecessary.

Every one, man and woman, babies or youth or the aged perished in the Deluge. It is now up to the Lord, Allah of all, to perpetually punish the disobedient or award salvation to those of infirm minds.

Where did Nooh's Ark come to Rest?

The Bible tells us that it was at Arrarat. Nooh's mission was in the territory between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Both these rivers rise in the mountains of Armenia and flowing separately through upper Iraq meet in the lower plains and disgorge in the Persian Gulf. These Armenian Mountains are in Ararat, on account of which the Bible uses this name. The Qur'an mentions only the specific hill, Judi, where the ark came to anchor. Biblical commentators say that Judi is the name of that range which joins the Georgian & Armenian Mountains. They also say that some Greek writings of the time of Alexander also confirm this. It cannot also be denied that until the 8th century of the

Christian calendar there was an idol here which was called "Ark Allah".

When Nooh was despaired of his people, he first of all prayed:

رَبِّ لَّا تَذَرُ عَلَيَّ الْاَرْضَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ دِيَارًا (۱) اِنَّكَ اِنْ تَذَرَهُمْ
يُضِلُّوْا عِبَادَكَ وَّلَا يَلِدُوْا اِلَّا فٰجِرًا كَفٰرًا (۲)
(نوح)

"My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers in the land. If Thou shouldst leave them, they will mislead Thy slaves and will beget none save lewd ingrates." (Nooh 26, 27)

Here he ignores any supplication for his son. This may be because upto this time he knew nothing about his son's unbelief.

The second time Nooh's prayer is:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَّلِوَالِدَيَّ وَّلِمَنْ دَخَلَ بَيْتِيْ مُؤْمِنًا وَّ لِلْمُؤْمِنٰتِ
وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ
(نوح)

"My Lord! Forgive me and my parents and him who entereth my house believing, and believing men and believing women" (Nooh 28)

Here, too, he makes no exception for his son; nor that his son was a believer and might be allowed to enter his house.

The third time he prayed:

وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِيْنَ اِلَّا تَبٰرًا
(نوح)

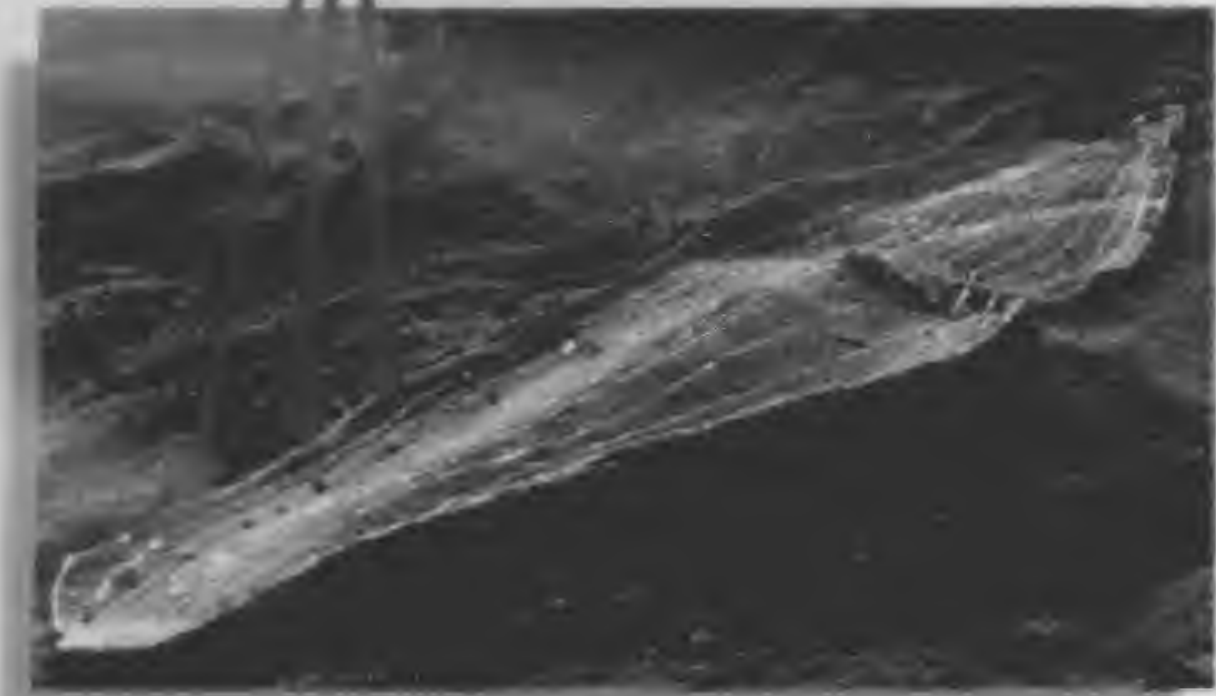
"And increase not the wrong-doers in aught save ruin."

(Nooh 28)

Canaan was of the zaalimeen, (tyrants) because he was an unbeliever. At this juncture, Nooh might also have prayed that his son be made to cease being a zaalim. And if Nooh did not know, it was a seal on his son's misfortune, which confirmed the youth's end. Thus when the time came for acceptance of prayers while Canaan's obstinacy continued, paternal love proved of no avail in the face of Divine justice. He had to seek forgiveness, and, in spite of his status, proved his total submission and achieved salvation and nearness to the Divine.

Important Conclusions

1. Every individual is answerable for his own deeds, and of none else. A father's greatness can be no compensation for his son's disobedience nor a



The remains of a great ark found recently in the Ararat mountain range. It is said that these are the remains of Noah's Ark.



Another aerial View of the
great ark.

son's piety for his father's rebellion. Nooh's being a prophet could be of no avail for his son's unbelief; Abraham's prophetic stature could do nothing for his father's salvation.

كُلٌّ يَّعْمَلُ عَلَىٰ شَاكِلِيهِ

"Every one doeth according to his nature."

2. Bad company is worse than poison. It brings only notoriety, contempt, loss and ruin. Just as goodness is necessary for human beings, far more is the company of good people; and just as it is necessary to save one's self from doing evil, far more it is necessary to keep away from bad company.

3. To work and provide for one's necessities is not against dependence on Allah. Rather it is the proper way for such reliance. Nooh had to build an ark for saving him and so many others.

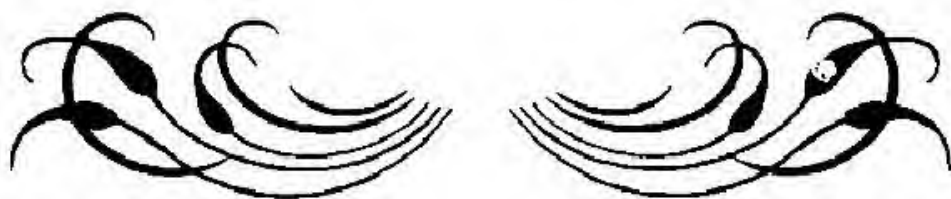
4. The stories of Adam and Nooh show that prophets, being human, may stumble, but they do not persist in the wrong. Also, they are not knowers of the invisible, as the following words show:

فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ

"Do not ask for that of which you have no knowledge".

5. Although the Divine law is always at work everywhere, in every nook and corner of the universe, it is not necessary that every sin should be punished in this very world. That is because this world is a field for action and deeds, the finale for which is the Hereafter. But cruelty and pride are two evils, punishment for which is bound to be inflicted right here.

Imam Abu Hanifa used to say that the tyrant and the proud get, at least, some punishment for their cruelty and pride before they die, stories of the exemplary destruction of the proud, arrogant and tyrannical are it's proof.



HAZRAT IDREES (Enoch) ﷺ

This prophet is mentioned in the Qur'an only in two places:

وَأَذْكُرْفِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا ۖ وَرَفَعْنَاهُ
مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ۗ

(مریم)

"And make mention in the Scripture of Idris. Lo! he was a saint, a prophrt, And We raised him to a high station."

(Maryam 19. 56 21.85)

وَأَسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ۗ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ۝

(انبياء)

"And mention Ismael and Idris and Zal-Kifl each one of them was patient."

(al Anmbiya 85)

There are great differences among scholars with regard to the prophet Idrees and no decisive conclusion can be arrived at even after all their opinions are considered side by side. The reason is that the Qur'an has only cursorily mentioned him from its own angle of guidance and objective, and the Traditions do not go any further. We have to depend only on Hebrew narratives and these are full of contradictions. Some state that he was Noah's ancestor, and that his name was Enoch (Akhnoch) and Idrees was his title.

His Genealogy is as Follows:

Akhnoch or Khanoq b. Yarud, b. Mahlail, b. Qinan b. Anoosh b. Shees b. Adam.

This is as Ibn Ishaq believes. Others think that Ilyas and Idrees are the same person, one of the Hebrew prophets. Some scholars basing their argument on these statements think that Akhnoch is an ancestor of Noah whose title is Idrees, while the Hebrew prophet's name is Idrees and title Ilyas. But these conclusions are without authority. The Qur'an mentions the two names separately.¹

Ibn Habban writes that Idrees was the first human to use a pen. Some one asked the Prophet ﷺ about *khutbat e Ramal* and he answered that knowledge of it was given to a prophet.

In this text, names are spelt according to their arabic pronunciation and not as found in the old and new testaments.

Hafiz Imaduddin Ibn Kathir says that according to several ulema and commentators, Idrees was the first human being to have used ramal, *harmis ul haramisa*,² as he calls him. He also ascribes many wrong things to Idrees, such as have been ascribed to several prophets, saints and other ulema.

In connection with the narrative about the Prophet ﷺ it is mentioned that Idrees is in the fourth heaven.

Ibn Jarir Tibri, basing his authority on Hilal b. Yasaf, quotes Abdullaah ibn Abbas as asking Ka'ab Ahbar his opinion about the words, "We raised him to a high station," with reference to Idrees, and Ka'ab replied that Allah inspired Idrees that He would bless him everyday with blessings equivalent to the number of blessings earned by the rest of humanity. On this, Idrees wished that it would be good if his age were increased so that his daily good deeds might be increased correspondingly. He, then, spoke to a friendly angel requesting him to speak to the Angel of Death so that he might get more opportunity to perform good deeds. At this the angel placed Idrees on his back and flew him into the heavens. When they arrived in the Fourth Heaven they met the Death Angel coming down on his way to the earth. The friend angel apprised the Death Angel about Idrees's desire. The Death Angel asked "Where is Idrees?" The Friend Angel answered, "Riding on my back." The Death Angel said, "I have been commanded to give him death in the Fourth Heaven and I was very perplexed how this could be possible when Idrees was on the earth". The Death Angel, then, seized Idrees's soul.

Ibn Abi Hatim has also quoted the same commentary. Ibn Kathir takes these commentaries as utter nonsense coming from Hebrew sources. The correct one is that given in the translation of the original text.

Basing his authority on Anas رضي الله عنه as mentioned in Zahri in connection with the *mairaj* narrative, Imam Bukhari quotes Abdullah b. Masud and Abdullah ibn Abbas to say that Idrees is the name of the prophet Ilyas.

The Prophet ﷺ met Idrees in the Fourth Heaven and Idrees greeted him with the words, "Welcome, good brother." Now if Idrees were Akhnuch, he would, like Adam and Abraham, have said, "Welcome, my good son". Ibn Kathir thinks that this argument is too flimsy. First of all, the reporter might easily have forgotten the exact words of this lengthy narrative. Besides, because of the high status of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, the word, 'brother' was used instead of the word, 'son'.

² *Hermes was a Greek astronomer. Harmis ul haramisa would mean master astronomer.*

Adam and Abraham could justifiably use the word 'son' because the one is father of all mankind and the other, the greatest of all prophets next only to the Prophet Muhammed ﷺ.

Ibn Kathir has also quoted some opinions that Idrees is not a pre-Noah prophet but one of the Hebrew prophets and is also named Ilyas.

All the Bible says about him is : "And Enoch (*Akhnoq*) was sixty-five years of age. He begot Methusaleh and walked with the Lord for three-hundred years. He begot sons and daughters and he lived for three-hundred and sixty-five years, and then he disappeared because Allah took him away."³

Idrees In The Eyes Of Philosophers

Allama Jamaluddin Qutfi in his *Tarikh ul Hukma*,⁴ writes: "It is not necessary to reproduce all that historians and scholars have written about Idrees but some significant accounts may be stated: There are differences of opinion regarding Idrees's birth place and how and from whom he received his education. Some believe that his name is Hermis ul Haramsa and that he was born in the Egyptian village of Manaf. In Greek, his name is spelt as Armis which means a 'Jupiter'.

Another school believes that in Greek his name is Tarmees, Khanoq in Hebrew and Akhnoq in Arabic. The Qur'an calls him Idrees. This school also says that his teacher's name was Ghousa Zi-moon or Aghousa Zimoon, an Egyptian, titled Idreen II and Idrees is Idreen III. Ghousa Zimoon means *good and highly blessed*. And also that Hermis travelled around the world and on his return to Egypt Allah lifted him when he was eighty-two years of age.

Yet another school holds that Idrees was born in Babylon where he grew up and that he received his early education from *Shees, Adam's son*. Allama Sharistani believe that Aghousa Zimoon is only another name of Shees. In any case, when he came to mature age, Allah blessed him with the prophethood. He, then, proclaimed his mission among the mischievous of the place but they paid no heed to him or to the shariah of Adam and Shees. However, a small party did convert to Islam.

On the whole Idrees was disappointed and thought of emigrating. He asked his followers to do the same but they hesitated saying that could not possibly hope to come by a better land. (Babylon literally means a 'canal', and being situated between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates, was very fertile).

³ Genesis 21-24.

⁴ The full name of this book is *Al-Muntakhibat ul Multaqlat min Kitab e Akhbar ul Ulama ba Akhbar ul Hukma*, for brevity known as *Zuzani*. Allama Jamaluddin Abul Hasan Ali b. Yusuf Qutfi is its author.

Idrees told them that Allah's bounty was very great and that if they bore a little discomfort for His sake, He would certainly compensate them most bountifully. He asked them not to despair or lose courage but bow their heads to Him. They did so and, with Idrees, left for Egypt.

Arriving here they were thrilled at the greenery of the Nile valley. Idrees exclaimed, *Ya balyoon* ('O big river'. Other meanings are, 'blessed river', and a 'river like yours'). The party settled down in one of the best parts of the region. Idrees's word '*balyoon*' became so famous the world over that the place came to be known as Balyoon. In Arabic the place was called Misr, after one, Misr Aam and his descendants having settled down here. Idrees resumed his missionary activities here. He learnt all the languages prevalent at the time and preached in the language of his audience.

Besides his main missionary work, Idrees also taught civic matters, astronomy and medicine. He collected a number of students, educated them and sent them to various parts of the land where they founded habitations. At least two-hundred new cities were added, one of the smallest of which was Raha, now totally destroyed but remains are still to be seen.

Idrees originated the science of numbers, arithmetic, medicine and astronomy. Allah educated him in the movement of the stars, galaxies, their coming together and dispersing, their magnetism and their mysteries. Allah revealed these sciences to mankind through this prophet.

Idrees formulated laws and rules commensurate with the various groups. He divided the world into four sections, appointed a governor for each of them who was responsible for its administration, and ordered that the supreme law would be that of the Divinely inspired commands.

The names of the administrator-kings are:

Ilawus, meaning merciful; Zous; Asqaliboos; Zous Amoon or Ilawus Amoon, or Basiloos.

Teachings of Idrees

Briefly stated, Idrees taught: faith in the Unity of Allah; to worship Him and Him alone, worship according to set rules, fasting on the 14th, 15th, and 16th of every lunar month; good deeds as protection against the punishment of the Hereafter; justice, impartiality and non-attachment; fighting in the path of Allah; regular payment of zaka't, purification and cleanliness; abstinence from swine-flesh and intoxicants and avoiding dogs.

He also appointed certain days of the year as *eid* and offering sacrifices. Some of these days were according to the appearance of the new moon, some when the sun entered certain zodiac fields, some according to the movements of the stars.

On his belt were inscribed the words:

الاعباد في حفظ الفروض واشريعته من تمام الدين وتمام الدين
كمال المروة

"Real eids are hidden in safeguarding the duties to Allah; religion (deen) is the performance of shariah; and the perfection of religion is considerateness.

The belt he wore at funeral prayers had the words:

السعيد من نظر لنفسه و شفاعته عند ربه اعماله الصالحة

"Blessed is he who controls his self; and his deeds intercede with Allah for him."

Many sayings, mottoes and counsels of Idrees have come down to us and are current in different languages. Some of them are:

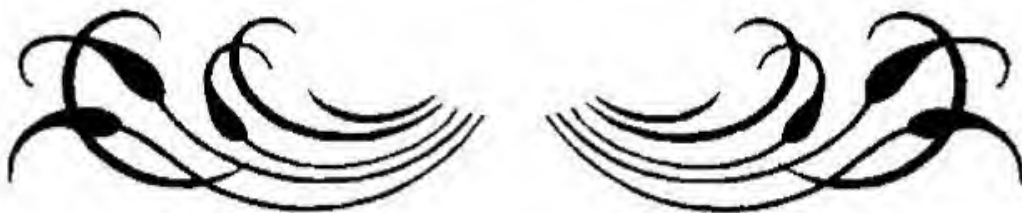
1. It is impossible for man to thank Allah sufficiently.
2. He who desires perfection in knowledge and good deeds should not go near evil deeds.
3. Have you not seen that when a tailor wishes to sew, he picks up a needle, not a drill.
4. The world's welfare is a longing, and its evil a cause of shame.
5. Sincerity of motive is essential for remembering Allah and doing well.
6. Take no false oaths, nor make Allah's name in vain nor make others take false oaths, because you will then be sharing the sin of it.
7. Do not adopt low professions; (such as horn-cupping or castrating animals for money).
8. Obey the kings appointed by the prophets for promulgating shariah.
9. Be lowly before your elders, and keep your tongue moist with remembrance of Allah.
10. Wisdom is the life of the soul.
11. Do not envy the happiness of others, because it is short-lived.

12. He who always desires more than his needs require will never be content.⁵

It is also stated in *Tarikh ul Hukama* that before the Deluge the author of all the knowledge published was this Hermis I who belonged to Upper Egypt. Greeks look upon him as Khanoq the prophet and great-grand-son of Adam in the sixth generation:

Khanoq (Idrees) b. Yarud b. Mahlail b. Qinan b. Anosh; b. Shees b. Adam. It is also claimed that the philosophy and astronomy found in books was first spoken by this prophet. He also constructed temples for the worship of the One True Allah, originated the science of medicine and wrote on the products the earth grows; and he was the first to warn about the Great Deluge, telling people that he had seen a vision of great catastrophe of water coming down from the skies and fire embracing the world. Fearing that the arts and crafts would be destroyed by the water, he built monasteries with sealed walls, and had pictures of various implements of production painted on them together with instructions for their use.

Apart from some facts written in books of philosophy and history, there is a great deal of mythology in connection with this prophet but it is presented as if it were incontrovertible matter. Archaeology has uncovered the truth. We have before us the calligraphy of those ages, the shapes and forms and arts and crafts and this should enable us to discriminate between fiction and fact. We should depend entirely on what the Qur'an has to say and the words of the Bible which are commensurate with the prophets.



⁵ *From Tarikh ul Hukma*

HAZRAT HOUD ﷺ

The Qur'an mentions the prophet Houd in seven places:

1. Surah e A`araaf verse 65
2. Surah Houd verse 50, 53, 58, 60, 89.
3. Surah Sho-a-ra verse 124;

and his people A`ad have been mentioned in nine surahs A`araaf, Houd, Mominoon, Sho-a-ra, Fussilat, Ahqaf, al Zariyat, al Qamar and al Haaqqa.

No book other than the Qur'an has anything to say about the prophet Houd or his people A`ad. Our authority, therefore, for what we may write about them can only be the Qur'an and the discoveries made by archaeologists. Our former source is absolute and the latter only a matter of conjecture and opinion.

A`ad is the name of an ancient Arab tribe or of communities that comprised a people of great prowess and power among the Saamia. Some old European writers refer to their story as no more than mythology but latter day investigation shows that ancient Arabs were a highly revered and powerful people, many of whom migrated to settle down in such distant places as Syria, Egypt and Babylon and established strong governments there. The difference of opinion now is only to determine whether those people were destroyed, umam e baaida, or whether their groups came to be known as A`ad, Thamud, Tisam and Jadis. Orientalists call them umam e samia. Names make no difference to the facts. That is why the Qur'an refers to them by one name as A`ad e oola, the first A`ad which term includes the Banu Sam.

Geographers tell us that the original word for the Arabs was araba, a desert. Aarab are people of the desert and araba are bedouins. Some think that the word originally was gharab, implying the land west of the Euphrates. They were aaraami people, the clan of Sam and were settled here. Gharab later corrupted to arab. Whatever the truth, the people settled here were of the clan of Sam; they were bedouins and their region was called A`ad. The word 'a`ad' is an Arabic word in Hebrew meaning 'high and famous'. The Qur'an uses the word iram with A`ad and this word too means high and famous. Followers of the Torah wrongly refer to these people as 'Amaliqah'.

The A`ad lived approximately two-thousand years before Jesus Christ. By describing them as "after the people of Noah, the Qur'an includes them as inheritors of Noah's people. This means that the subsequent population of Syria originated from these people.

Their metropolis was Ahqaf, situated to the north of the Hadramaut with Oman in the east, empty waste in the north. Today there is nothing but sandhills here, some historians tell us that their population spread from the best part of Arabia, the Hadramaut, Yemen along the Persian Gulf as far as Iraq and Yemen was their capital city.

Their Religion

They were idolators and, like the folk of Noah, great experts at sculpture and as historians aver, their gods were the same: Wud, Sawa, Yaghous, Yadooque, and Nasr; and, according to Abdullah ibn Abbas, also Samood and Hata.

Power and wealth so estranged the A'ad people from Allah that they forgot His unity altogether, set up a number of idols to worship and drifted into evil conduct. Allah, then, raised up a prophet from among themselves. Houd belonged to the most respected of their clan, the Khaloud. He was of awe-inspiring physique, white of complexion, and long bearded.

(Aini: Kitab ul Anbiyah Vol. 7)

Houd called his people to the Unity of Allah, the worship of Him, good deeds and that they give up their oppression of one another. But they remained obdurate, and out of great pride boasted that none could compare with them in power and wealth. Houd, on his part, persisted in his mission, reminded them of what had happened to Noah's people, and of the inevitable consequences of evil conduct.

"Thank Allah," he would tell them, "that Allah has given you wealth and power; made you inheritors of the earth after Noah's folk; and bestowed many a blessing on you. Give up making and worshipping idols; they can neither profit you in any way nor give you any pain. Life and death, profit and loss, comfort and pain are all in Allah's hands. You have been rebelling against Him for a long time, but even now if you repent, He will forgive you. His mercy is very great; the door is not closed on you. Turn to good ways and seek your salvation from Him. He will give you plentifully, and increase your honour," and so forth.

Houd would also tell them that he wanted no reward or compensation from them, no rapport or honour. His reward was with Allah. His purpose was but one: to convey his Lord's message to them.

There were but few righteous people among the A'ad and most of them were greatly annoyed at Houd's words. They could not brook any interference in their thought and ways from anyone and they would ridicule him and his words:

يَهُودِمَا جِئْنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِي الْهَيْئَةِ عَنْ قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ
بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

(هود ع ٥)

THE PEOPLE OF 'AD



The remains of the city of Ubar, where 'Ad lived, were found somewhere near to the coasts of Oman.



Excavations made in Ubar



The location of the city of 'Ad was discovered by photographs taken from the Space Shuttle. On the photograph, the place where caravan trails intersect is marked, and it points towards Ubar.



1. Ubar, could only be seen from space before excavations were made.
2. A city 12 metres below the sands was uncovered by excavations.

"Houd! You have brought us no good argument; we cannot give up our gods on your account and we will not believe in you."
(Houd R5)

They told him that they could not possibly believe that he was Allah's messenger or believe that their gods would not intercede with Allah. Houd would tell them in return that he was not mentally deficient, for, Allah does not choose the weak-headed to be his prophets, so that, instead of being beneficial they do greater harm; and instead of guidance, greater misguidance may result. Allah chooses for His work only such as can properly fulfil the duties assigned to them.

اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ -

"Allah knows well where He should place His message."

But the people's obstinacy only increased; they made fun of the prophets, styling them as lunatics. They told him, "Houd, since you started preaching and advising, we see that your condition has become very bad; because of the curses of our gods you have gone mad." They thought that hearing such words and seeing their boldness, no one would care to pay him any attention.

Houd heard such language with patience and said: "First, I call Allah to witness and also you to witness that I disassociate myself from any such faith that your gods can do me or anyone else any harm. Next, I challenge them that if they have any such power, they should hasten to inflict whatever harm they can on me. By Allah's grace, I am perfectly sound of mind. I rely on Him alone Who has power over all living things. He will certainly help me and save me from all manner of harm!"

At last, Houd announced that if the A'ad persisted in their obduracy, destruction was inevitable for them, although he was always ready to be of service to them, and that Allah would bring another people to inherit them. They could do no harm to Allah Who was powerful over all things, the whole universe being encompassed in His hand. He called them to come to their senses, learn a lesson from Noah's folk; that he was a trustee of Allah's message and wished them well, both in this world and the Hereafter; that they should not be surprised that one of their own selves had been inspired to preach to them because this was nothing novel but was Allah's usual practice to pick some one from amongst a people to address them with words that He addressed his chosen ones with. And this is as it should be because only one of them could best be acquainted with their habits, the good in them and the bad, and he alone could be sincerely interested in them.

They were confused not knowing what worshipping Allah the One meant and looked upon renouncing their idolatry as an affront to their ancestors who held them as their intercessors with the Supreme One and adored their pictures and statues. A`ad were enraged, and since he had told them:

(الشعراء) إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

"I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day."

(al Sho-a-ra)

They challenged him to bring what he had been threatening them with,

(الاعراف) فَآتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

"Then bring on us that which thou makest a promise of, if thou art, indeed, the truthful."

(Al Aa'raaf)

Houd replied that if their response to his sincere and truthful counsel was such, and they were so eager for Allah's punishment, then, to be sure, it was not far!

(الاعراف ع ٩) قَدْ وَقَعَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ وَغَضَبٌ

"There is no doubt that the punishment of Allah has come"

(al Aa'raaf R9)

"Are you not ashamed of what you are doing? That you call on your own hand-made idols with names you have coined, and you look upon them as intercessors, as your fathers did, and spurn my enlightened arguments, and rebelling call on punishment to overtake you. So if you are so desirous of it, let us both wait, because the time is almost on us", Houd said:

أُتَجَادِ لَوْلَنِي فِي أَسْمَاءٍ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاءُكُمْ مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ()

(الاعراف ع ٩)

"Do ye argue with me about that which are but names which you and your forefathers have coined and for which ye have no authority. So wait, I too am waiting."

(al Aa'raaf R 9)

Signs of impending Divine punishment first came in the form of a whole dry year. The A`ad were terribly upset and Houd again turned with compassion to them, and again invited them to pay heed to his call for this was the only path for salvation in this world and the next. But they remained unimpressed:

indeed, their opposition increased all the more. Then the terrible punishment befell upon them from all sides. For eight days and seven nights an overpowering hurricane swept over them and turned their habitations upside down. Proud, stalwart men now lay lifeless like tree-trunks leveled to the ground by a storm, they were made extinct so that they may serve as examples for coming generations. Curse and punishment befell them because they merited such wrath.¹

Those who obeyed the prophet Houd and were sincere in their professing of Islam were saved from the fate of the rebellious ones.

This is the narrative of the First A'ad which contains in itself countless lessons for those who possess vision, and invites them to the commands of Allah and a life of purity and uprightness; warns against evil deeds, rebellion, and their consequences, for those who arrogantly scoff at them.

The manner in which the Qur'an has given the story with such emphasis on its lessons should be read carefully, because this is the best treasury of welfare and blessings.

وَالِى عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا ۖ قَالَ يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۗ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ () قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرُّكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَإِنَّا لَنَنْظُنُّكَ مِنَ الْكٰذِبِينَ () قَالَ يَقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ وَلٰكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِينَ () أَبْلُغْكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَإِنَّا لَكُم نٰصِحٌ ۭ آمِينَ () أَوْعَجِبْتُمْ أَن جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ ۖ وَاذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِن بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوْحٍ وَزَادَكُمْ فِي الْخَلْقِ بَصِطَةً ۖ فَاذْكُرُوا ؕ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ () قَالُوا اجْتَنَبْنَا لِنَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ، وَنَذَرْنَا مَا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا ۖ فَآتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِن كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِينَ () قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ وَغَضَبٌ ۗ أَتُجَادِلُونَنِي فِيْ أَسْمَاءِ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ

Scholars give the number of those destroyed to be about three to four thousand, as quoted in Rooh al Ma'ni: but the Qur'an having stated the condition of these people with such cinnence, their number must have been much greater. Allah knows the best.

مَا نَزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ۚ فَانْتَظِرُوْا اِنِّيْ مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِيْنَ ()
 فَانْجَيْنٰهُ وَالَّذِيْنَ مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَقَطَعْنَا دَابِرَ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِآيٰتِنَا ۗ
 وَمَا كَانُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ () (الاعراف ع ٩)

And unto the tribe of A'ad We sent their brother Hud. He said, O my people, serve Allah. Ye have no other God save Him. Will ye not ward off evil? The chieftains of his people who were disbelieving, said, Lo! We surely see thee in foolishness, and lo! We deem thee of the liars. He said, O my people! There is no foolishness in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the Worlds. I convey unto you the messages of my Lord, and am for you a true adviser. Marvel, you that there should come unto you a Reminder from your Lord by means of a man from among you that he may warn you? Remember how He made you viceroys after Noah's folk and gave you growth of stature. Remember (all) the bounties of your Lord, that haply you may be successful.

They said: Hast come unto us that we should serve Allah alone, and forsake what our fathers worshipped. Then bring on us wherewith thou threatenest us, if thou art of the truthful. He said: Terror and wrath from your Lord have already fallen on you. Would you wrangle with me over names which you have named, ye and your fathers, for which no warrant from Allah hath been revealed? Then await, (the consequences)! Lo! I am also of those awaiting it!

And We saved him and those with him by a mercy from Us, and We cut the roots of those who denied Our revelations, and were not believers. (al A'raaf 65-72)

وَالِي عَادٍ اٰخَاهُمْ هُوْدًا ۗ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوْا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرِهٖ ۗ ۚ
 اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا مُفْتَرُوْنَ () يٰقَوْمِ لَآ اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا ۗ اِنْ اَجْرِيْ اِلَّا
 عَلٰى الَّذِيْ فَطَرَنِيْ ۗ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ () وَيٰقَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ
 تَوْبُوْا اِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّدْرَارًا وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً اِلٰى قُوَّتِكُمْ
 وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ () قَالُوْا يٰهُودُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِيْ
 الْهَيْئَةِ عَنْ قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ () اِنْ نَقُولُ اِلَّا اعْتَرٰتَكَ

بَعْضُ إِلَهَتِنَا بِسُوءٍ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّي أُشْهِدُ اللَّهَ وَاشْهَدُوا أَنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ () مِنْ دُونِهِ فَكَيْدُونِي جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ لَاتَنْظِرُونَ () إِنِّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ ۚ مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ () فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَيْكُمْ ۚ وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبِّي قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ۚ وَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ شَيْئًا ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيفٌ () وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُودًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ () وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ جَحَدُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا رُسُلَهُ ۚ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ () وَاتَّبَعُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۚ أَلَا إِنَّ عَادًا كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ ۚ أَلَا بُعْدًا لِّعَادٍ قَوْمِ هُودٍ ()

(هود)

(هود)

And unto (the tribe of) A'ad We sent thier brother Hud. He said, O my people, serve Allah. Ye have no other God save Him. Lo! Ye do but invent. O my people, I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is the concern only on Him Who made me. Have ye then no sense?

And O my people, ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn unto Him repentant. He will cause the sky to remain abundance unto and will add strength to your strength. Turn not away guilty.

They said O Hud! Thou hast brought us no clear proof and we are not going to forsake our gods on thy (mere) saying, and we are not believers in them. We say naught save that one of our gods hath possessed thee in an evil way. He said, I call Allah to witness and do ye too bear witness that I am innocent of (all) ye ascribe as partners to Allah beside Him. So (try to) circumvent me, all of you, and give me no respite. Lo! I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Not an animal but he doth grasp it by the forlock. Lo! My Lord is on a straight path.

And if ye turn away, still I have conveyed unto you that wherewith I was sent unto you, and my Lord will set in place of you a folk other than you. Ye cannot injure Him at all.

Lo! My Lord is guardian over all things. And when Our commandment came to pass. We saved Hud and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us. We saved them from a harsh doom. And such were A'd. They denied the revelations of their Lord and flouted His messengers and followed the command of every froward potentate. And a curse was made to follow them in this world and on the Day of Resurrection. Lo! Aa'd disbelieved in their Lord, a far removal for A'ad, the folk of Hud! (Houd : 50-60)

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ () فَأَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ أَنْ
اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۖ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ () وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِإِلقاءِ الْآخِرَةِ وَآتَرَفْنَاهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ ۖ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا
تَشْرَبُونَ () وَلَئِنْ أَطَعْتُمْ بَشَرًا مِثْلَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لَخَسِرُونَ () أَيْعِدُكُمْ
أَنْكُمْ إِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنْتُمْ تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَنْكُمْ مُخْرَجُونَ () هِيَ هَاتِ
هِيَ هَاتِ لِمَا تُوعَدُونَ () إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا
نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ () إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا وَمَا نَحْنُ
لَهُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ () قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونَ () قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ
لَيُصْبِحُنَّ نَادِمِينَ () فَأَخَذْتَهُمُ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ غُثَاءً ۖ فَبَعْدًا
لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ () (المؤمنون)

Then after them We brought forth another generation. And We sent among them a messenger of their own, saying, Serve Allah. Ye have no other God save Him. Will ye not ward off evil?

And the chieftains of his folk who disbelieved and denied the meeting of the Hereafter, and whom We had made soft in the life of the world, said. This is only a mortal like you, who eateth of that whereof ye eat and drinketh of that whereof ye drink. If ye were to obey a mortal like yourselves, then, lo! surely you would be losers. Doth he promise you that you when you are dead and have become dust and bones, will

again be brought forth? Begone, begone with that which ye are promised! There is nothing but our life of the world. We die and we live, and we shall not be raised (again). He is only a man who hath invented a lie about Allah. We are not going to put faith in him. He said, My Lord! Help me, because they deny me!

He said in a short while they will surely become repentant. So the awful cry overtook them rightfully, and We reduced them to rubble: So, away with the iniquitous people.

(al-Mominoon)

كَذَّبَتْ عَادُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ () إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ أَخُوهُمْ هُودٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ()
 إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ () فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا () وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ
 مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ () أَتَبْنُونَ بِكُلِّ رِيعٍ آيَةً
 تَعْبَثُونَ () وَتَتَّخِذُونَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُونَ () وَإِذَا بَطِئْتُمْ
 بَطِئْتُمْ جِبَارِينَ () فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا () وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِي أَمَدَّكُمْ بِمَا تَعْلَمُونَ
 () أَمَدَّكُمْ بِأَنْعَامٍ وَبَنِينَ () وَجَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ () إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ
 عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ () قَالُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْنَا أَوَعَضْتَ أَمْ لَمْ تَكُنْ مِنْ
 الْوَاعِظِينَ () إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا خُلُقُ الْأَوَّلِينَ () وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذِّبِينَ ()
 فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ()
 وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ () (الشعراء)

A'ad were mendacious to the messengers. When their brother Hud said to them, "Will you not venerate"? I am indeed a veracious messenger to you. So venerate God and obey me. And I ask you no wage for that, for my wage falls only upon the Lord of the words. Do you build on every high place a sign for frolic? And do you raise edifices as though you would that for ever? And when you seize by cruelty, you seize as depots.

Rather keep your duty to Allah, and obey me. Keep your duty toward Him Who hath aided you with the good things that you know, hath aided you with cattle and sons, and gardens and water springs. Lo! I fear for you the retribution of an awful day!

لَمْ يَكْفُرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَمْرًا إِسْلَامًا وَلَا
 بِمَا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا كَانُوا عَلَيْهِ كَافِرِينَ
 وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَارُ مَا يُؤْتِيهِ الْإِسْلَامَ
 مَا يَشَاءُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ غَنِيًّا
 وَمَا يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ لِنَبِيِّ إِذْ أَخْبَرَهُمْ
 أَنْ لَا تَقُولُوا مَا يُفْتَرُونَ (15-16)
 وَمَا يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ لِنَبِيِّ إِذْ أَخْبَرَهُمْ
 أَنْ لَا تَقُولُوا مَا يُفْتَرُونَ (15-16)

(Ha Mim Sajda 15-16)

Therefore, We let loose on them a raging wind in evil days,
 that We made them taste the torment of disgrace in the life
 of this world. And verily the doom of the Hereafter will be
 more shameful and they will not be helped.

As for A'ad, they were arrogant in the land without right,
 and they said, Who is mightier than us in power? Could they
 not see that Allah Who created them, He was mightier than
 them in power? And they denied Our revelations.

(حج سجدہ) اجری وہی ال یصرون ()

لَمْ يَكْفُرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَمْرًا إِسْلَامًا وَلَا
 بِمَا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا كَانُوا عَلَيْهِ كَافِرِينَ
 وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَارُ مَا يُؤْتِيهِ الْإِسْلَامَ
 مَا يَشَاءُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ غَنِيًّا
 وَمَا يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ لِنَبِيِّ إِذْ أَخْبَرَهُمْ
 أَنْ لَا تَقُولُوا مَا يُفْتَرُونَ (15-16)

They said it is all one for us whether thou preachest or art
 not of those who preach. This but a fable of the men of old:
 and we shall not be doomed. And they denied him:
 therefore, We destroyed them. Lo! Herein indeed is a
 portent, yet most of them are not believers! And lo! Thy Lord
 is indeed the Mighty, the Merciful! (al Shuara : 123-140)

أَفْتَدَتْهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِذْ كَانُوا يَجْحَدُونَ ۖ بَايْتَ اللَّهِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا
 بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ()
 (احقاف)

And make mention (O Muhammed) of the brother of A'ad, when he warned his folk among the wind-carved sandhills, and verily wanners came and went before and after him --- saying, Serve none but Allah. Lo! I fear for you the doom of a tremendous day!

They said hast thou come to turn us away from our gods? Then bring upon us that wherewith thou threaenest us, if thou art of the truthful. He said, The knowledge thereof is with Allah only. I convey unto you that wherewith I have been sent, but I see you a folk that know not. Then when they beheld it as a dense cloud coming toward their valleys, they said, Here is a cloud bringing us rain. Nay, but it is that which ye did seek to hasten, a wing wherein is painful torment, destroyng all things by commadment of its Lord. And morning found them so that naught could be seen save their dwellings. Thus do we reward the guilty folk!

And verily We had empowered them with wherewith We have not empowered you, and had assigned them ears and eyes and hearts, but their ears and eyes and hearts availed them nothing since they denied the revelation of Allah, and what they used to mock befell them. (al Ahqaf 21-26)

وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ () مَا تَذَرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَتَتْ عَلَيْهِ
 إِلَّا جَعَلَتْهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ ()
 (الذاريات)

And in the (tribe of) A'ad (there is a portent) when We sent the fatal wind against them. It spared naught that it reached, but made it all as dust. (al Zarriyat 41-42)

كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذْرٍ () إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِم رِيحًا
 صَرْصَرًا فَيَوْمَ نَحْسٍ مُسْتَمِرٍّ () تَنْزِعُ النَّاسَ كَأَنَّهُمْ أُعْجَازُ
 نَخْلٍ مُنْقَعِرٍ () فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذْرٍ ()
 (القمر)

(The tribe of) A'ad rejected warnings. Then how dreadful was My punishment after My warnings. And We let loose on them a raging wind on a day of constant calamity. Sweeping

men away as though they were uprooted trunks of trees.
Then see how (dreadful) was My punishment after My
warnings.

(al Qamar 18-21)

وَأَنزَلْنَا سحابًا سميًّا أَسودًّا
وَسودًّا بياضًا فَبَرَدْنَا بَرْدًا بَرْدًا
فَسَاءَ يَوْمًا فَسَاءَ يَوْمًا يُرَى
الْيَوْمُ فِيهَا صُرُوعًا وَبَرْدًا
يَوْمًا يَوْمًا يَوْمًا يَوْمًا يَوْمًا

(الأنعام)

And as for A'ad, they were destroyed by a fiercece roaring
wind, which He imposed on them for seven long nights and
eight long days so that thou mightest have seen men lying
overthrown as if they were hollow trunks of palm trees.
Canst thou see any remnant of them?

(al Haqqa 6-8)

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّارِ
مَاءً فَأَنزَلْنَاهُ فِى الْوَادِئِ
فَمَا تَرَ إِلَّا أَشْجَارًا سَائِغَةً
تَبْدُو كَاللَّذَلَّةِ الْيَتِيمِ
الَّذِى إِذَا دُلَّ سَأَلَ عَنَّا
مَنْ لَمْ يَرْجُوا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ

Dost thou not consider how thy Lord dealt with the people of
A'ad with many columned Iram. The like of which was not
created in the land?

(al Fajjar 6-8s)

Demise of Houd:

Arabs make many claims about the burial place of the prophet Houd. The people of Hadramaut think that after the destruction of A'ad, he had migrated to the townships of Hadramaut, and that he died there and was buried in its eastern part about two leagues from the city of Tarmim.

A Tradition from Ali states that Houd was buried on a red mound in Hadramaut and there is a riverine tree by the head of his tomb.

Palestinians say that Houd was buried somewhere in Palestine. They have erected a tomb there, and go on an annual pilgrimage to the place.

(Qasas ul Ambiya p. 74)

The claim made for Hadramaut seems to be right because A'ad habitations were close to this region. It appears likely that he must have migrated to some nearby place, and lived and died there.

Some lessons –

Besides the special ones already stated:

1. Any one who reads the story about the people of A'ad must conjure up a personality of dignified sobriety, & nobleness are evident from the face,

weighs the two sides of his thought relative to its consequences. He responds to the people's ridicule with patience and control, and is always desirous of their welfare; sincerity and purity of motive can be seen on his forehead. His people say:

إِنَّا لَنَرُكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَإِنَّا لَنَظُنُّكَ مِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ (١)

Indeed we find thee as one who has no sense, and we deem thee to be a liar.

But in reply he only says,

يَقَوْمِ لَيْسَ لِيْ سَفَاهَةٌ وَلٰكِنِّيْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ اُبَلِّغُكُمْ
رِسٰلَتِ رَبِّيْ وَاَنَا لَكُمْ نٰصِيْحٌ اٰمِيْنٌ -

O my people! I am not foolish. I am only a messenger from the Lord of the Worlds conveying His messages to you, a trustworthy well-wisher.

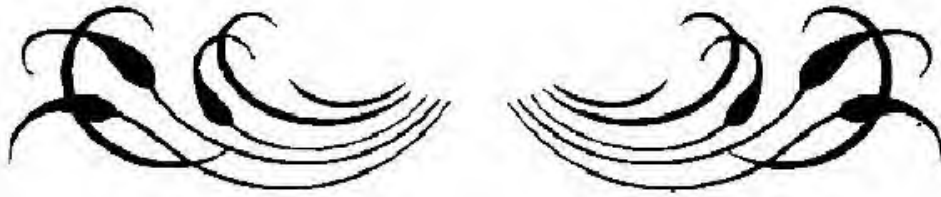
Such dialogue shows that Allah's chosen servants do not care about being ridiculed or affronted, when they are trying to straighten their crookedness, they do turn away from preaching the truth or with despair or remorse or give up their mission, keeping themselves occupied with curing the sick afflicted with spiritual disease. And for all this, as a distinguishing characteristic they desire no compensation from the people, transcending all motives of return and recompense.

وَمَا اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ اِنْ اَجْرِيْ اِلَّا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ -

I ask you no wage for it: my wage is the concern only of Allah.

2. With due gentleness the prophet Houd did his best to make the people believe in the unity of Allah, reminded them of His endless blessings and promises of the future, but these unfortunates would not pay heed. The biggest obstacle in their way was their foolish superstition inherited from their fathers that whoever raises his voice against their own hand-made idols would be cursed by their anger. Wherever this superstition pervades, the treatment extended to the prophets is that which we read about in the narratives of the peoples of the Prophet Houd and Noah. The enmity against the good counsellors and prophets of truth is based on the intolerance of what is said against the hand-made idols. Socrates had to drink the cup of hemlock because he denied the curse and wrath of the gods of his community and opposed their power and domination. Such superstition has always been eternally fatal for the people.

3. It has been the customary practice of all prophets to return good for evil in the path of their mission, and soft gentle words in answer to bitter language. But they must also remind the people of Allah's inviolable law of retribution; warn them of evil consequence and that when a nation collectively rebels and is tyrannical, and pursues its evil ways, Allah exterminates it from the face of the earth and its place is taken by another. The exemplary fate of the people of Noah and 'Aad is an instance.



HAZRAT SALEH ﷺ

The name of this prophet is mentioned in the Qur'an eight times in:

<i>Surah</i>	<i>Verse</i>
Aa'raaf	73, 75, 77
Houd	61, 62, 66, 89
Shua'ra	142

Saleh's people are known as Thamud and are mentioned in nine Surahs:

Aa'raaf, Houd, Hajar, Namal, Fussilat, al Najm, al Qamar, al Haqqa, and al Shams.

Genealogy:

Genealogists are not agreed on Saleh's ancestral tree. The famous traditionalist Hafiz Imam Baghvi records the genealogy as follows:

Thamud, Havar, Obayd, Masheh, Asif, Obayd, Saleh,

But Wahab b. Munabbah has it as: Thamud, Jabir, Obayd, Saleh.¹

Although Baghvi is much later than Wahab, and Wahab is also a great scholar of the Bible, it is Baghvi's genealogy that is approved by the genealogists as more dependable. This genealogy also shows that Saleh's people were named after their common ancestor: Saleh b. Ubayd b. Jabir b. Thamud, founder of their tribe.

There are also two versions in regard to the genealogy from Thamud to Noah:

Thamud b. Amir b. Iram b. Sam; and the other: Thamud b. A'ad b. Aous. b. Iram b. Sam b. Noah.

Syed Mahmood Aaloosi tells us in Rooh ul Ma'ani that Imam Tha'ibi gives preference to the latter version. However, both the versions show that the Thamud tribe is also a branch of the children of Sam, and that it was these people who were saved with Houd when the A'ad were destroyed. They came to be known as the Second A'ad.

¹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir. Surah e Aaraaf

Thamud Habitations

They inhabited Hajar, the plain between Syria and the Hijaz as far as the Qara valley. Till this day it is known as Faj el Naqata. Their ruins are still to be seen. Egyptian archaeologists who visited these places tell us of a very large house, said to be a royal palace carved out in the mountains. There are several rooms in it and a large pond.

The famous Arab historian Masudi writes:

“The traveller from Syria to Hijaz comes across their ruins and other traces. This spot known as Hajar e Thamud lies south-east of Madene city, with the Gulf of Aqaba facing him. Just as the A'ad are called A'ad e Iram, so the Thamud are called Thamood e Iram. After their desolation, they came to be known as the Second A'ad.

Orientalists have derived very wrong conclusions. They aver that the Thamud were a branch of the Hebrew race who separated from the main body and settled down here. But this is entirely baseless as the Thamud belongs to a time long before Moses stepped out of Egypt with the Children of Israel. Besides, when the Egyptians under Pharaoh refused to believe Moses, one of their own men warned them lest the same fate befall them as befell the people of Thamud and A'ad and Noah.

Another school of orientalist says that the Thamud were from among the Amabeqa and leaving the western shores of the Euphrates had settled down here. Some also state that these people were from among those Amabeqa who had been banished by the Egyptian king Hamas. They were expert stone-carvers and when they arrived here they carved out whole dwellings in the mountains.

We have proved that A'ad and Thamud were Samian tribes and had no connection whatever with Amlique b. Ud.

Of all opinions on the subject the most correct one is that Thamood were remnants of the A'ad. The claim made by the people of the Hadramaut that Thamud habitations and palaces are the workmanship of A'ad's arts and crafts does not contradict our view.

وَأَذْكُرُ وَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَ بَوَّأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
تَتَخَذُونَ مِنْ سُهُولِهَا قُصُورًا وَ تَنْحِتُونَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتًا

“And remember the time when Allah made you to inherit the A'ad, and gave you a place on the earth that you may build mansions on it and carve them out of rocks”

And remember how He made you inheritors after the 'Ad people and gave you habitations in the land: ye build for yourselves palaces and castles in (open) plains, and carve out homes in the mountains; so bring to remembrance the benefits (ye have received) from Allah, and refrain from evil and mischief on the earth.

(Surat al-Araf: 74)



Boasting a past of two thousand years, Thamud had established a kingdom with another Arabian people, the Nabataeans. Today, in the Rum Valley, also called the Valley of Petra, in Jordan, it is possible to see the best examples of the stone-carving work of these people. Also in the Qur'an, Thamud are mentioned with their mastery of masonry.



The Time

The age of the Thamud cannot be determined. All that may be said is that their time was before Abraham. It is interesting to note that graves have been discovered here with epitaphs written in Aramaic and the dates inscribed are of a time before Jesus. This may give rise to the suspicion that they came into being after Moses, but that is not so. These graves are of those people who came later to settle down here long after the Thamud were destroyed. Their language was Aramaic.

Egypt's Christian historian Georgie Zaidan writes in his book *al Arab qabl al Islam* (Arabs before Islam) that the habitations of the people of Saleh had come into Nabtiyoon's possession some time before Jesus. The people were from the dwellers of Batra and their mounds and remains had been seen by many orientalist, detailed in the Foreword. They had read the inscriptions on the stones. The most important are the ruins which are named *Qas re hint*, *Qabar Basha*, *Qila* and *Burj*. The inscriptions are in Nabti, and whatever is written here is that same that is inscribed over the graves. One epitaph reads.

"Mausoleum built for herself and her children by Kumkum daughter of Va-ila daughter of Haram and Kumkum's daughter Kaliba. Its foundation has been laid in very blessed months in the ninth year of the enthronement of Harith who truly loves his tribe. And accursed by Omi, Zul Shara, Laat, Manoot and Quees be he who sells these graves or mortgages them or digs out a limb, or buries any one here except Kumkum and her daughter.

And whoso counteracts what is written here, may he be cursed five times by Zul Shara, Hubl and Manoot. And any sorcerer who does anything against it, let him be fined a thousand Harithi dirham, unless he has in his hand a writing of Kumkum or Kaliba or any of their children, clearly permitting the same and it is not a forgery but the pure original.

This mausoleum has been built by Wahb ul Laat b. Ibada."

Like their ancestors the Thamud were idolators, therefore, Allah raised up a prophet from amongst themselves to bring them to the right path. One who would remind them of the blessings of the One True Allah and show by reasoning and persuasion how they were astray and that all that they saw and derived pleasure from bore witness to His Unity and that beside Him there was none worthy of worship.

The Qur'an's style is to narrate the events of former prophets and to project its guidance through their example. Its purpose is not to relate stories, but to show that since Allah has blessed man with intelligence, he may recognize all that his Creator has provided for his guidance, what is according to or against His pleasure. Allah sends prophets, guides and warners from among the erring people themselves, who teach them how they should save themselves from straying off the correct path. The history of nations is presented solely from this angle. These historical lessons are variously repeated. At times Allah displays signs to confirm the truthfulness of them. Some of the signs may be called miracles. If a people do not renounce their erring ways and obstinately pursue the wrong, Divine wrath visits them and they are destroyed.

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ يَبْعَثَ فِي أُمَمٍ رَسُولًا يَتْلُو
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا ۗ وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرَىٰ إِلَّا وَأَهْلُهَا ظَالِمُونَ (١)

(قصص ع ٦)

"And never did thy Lord destroy the townships till he had raised up in their mother town a messenger reciting unto them our revelations. And never did We destroy the townships unless the folk thereof were evil-doers."

(Qasas R 6)

What is Mojiza (Miracle)

Mojiza (miracle) in Arabic means something that fatigues or humbles one. In religious terminology, it means action which without any apparent, natural reason produces or effects something. This is also commonly spoken of as *kharq e aadat* or, simply, as 'unusual'. It may be asked here whether it is possible for *aadat Allah*, which is *natural process* to be violated. Or is change possible in nature's law?

The answer is that it is wrong to interpret a miracle as meaning a digress from *khariq e aadat*. Allah's laws of nature are of two kinds: *aadat e aam* and *aadat khaas*: usual practice and special practice. Usual practice comprises those laws of nature which are bound together; for instance, fire burns, water wets; and special practice is the severance of the relation between cause and effect for some special purpose (by nature's hand that creates a relation between cause and effect), giving existence to a thing without a cause. For instance, the presence of fire but it does not burn; or filling the appetites of a hundred with food sufficient only for two or three and some of it still left over.

The occurrence of such things being of nature's usual practice, it is said that they are against nature's law or Allah's practice. But that is not so. The

occurrence is against usual practice but not against special practice. It is, in fact, a link in nature's law, displayed for some special purpose, which is to confirm the truthful claim of Divine messengers so as to make their deniers believe that if they were not true, such and such would not happen at their hands. It proves that the performance is not their performance but that of Allah displayed as His special practice as argument for the messenger's genuineness.

It is also true that if miracles were not given to a prophet, faith in him would still be incumbent on us. Because of the presence of the Divine scripture and the intellectual arguments presented to us denying would be, in religious terms, *kufr*. Above all, it is a recognized fact that more than by arguments and miracles, human nature is overawed by things that amaze one's intelligence, forcing him to admit that such action of the prophet comes from Divine power, to resist which is beyond human ability. Humbled thus one admits that without doubt the prophet and messenger has Divine backing, and, therefore, whatever he speaks is spoken on behalf of the Divine One. The argument of some intellectuals that miracles are no proof of prophethood is to deny Divine truth, no sign of faith whatever.

In short, faith in a prophet is incumbent whether or not he performs a miracle, and if, on the unbelievers demanding a miracle, it is displayed, or the prophet, on his own, performs one it will be an argument for the prophet's truth and a denial of it will be unbelief and listlessness, *kufr*.

It is, therefore, incumbent on every one, without exception, to have faith in the proven miracles of the prophets and openly acknowledge them. To deny any of the miracles is to step out of the pail of Islam.

At the same time, it should never be forgotten that the performance of something unusual does not necessarily mean that it is a miracle or that its performer is a Divine messenger or prophet, because the first condition of a prophet is that his entire life should have triumphed out of every test and trial leaving none of its aspects objectionable. His whole life should be of loftiest morals, innocent of sin, truthfulness of speech and deeds in the very highest. If such a man, claim to be a prophet and, in support of his claim produce, besides arguments, certain signs or miracles of the Divine Being, then he is without doubt a prophet, and his performance may be described as a miracle.

We have just said that a miracle is not the work of a prophet but that of Allah Himself which He demonstrates by His prophet's hands. That is because a prophet is, after all, a human being and it is not in any human being's power to interfere with Allah's usual or special process of natural law. It depends entirely on Allah's pleasure, when He thinks the time is suitable that He may display something beyond the common natural process, and if He does not so

desire, it is impossible for a prophet or Divine messenger to perform the unusual.

During the battle at Badr, when a thousand of the enemy fully armed in every way, attacked a body of but three-hundred-and-thirteen Muslims the Prophet ﷺ threw a handful of dust in the direction of the infidels, the dust blew into their eyes which they began to rub, which enabled the Muslims to attack and gain a signal victory. The Qur'an supports our argument.

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ (انفال)

“And you (O Mohammed) did not throw the dust which you threw, but it was Allah Who threw it. (Anfal)

Normally it would have been impossible for a handful of dust to be thrown from a distance in the direction of so many to oblige them to begin rubbing their eyes as though it was immersed in their eyelids. This could be only the work of the Almighty Lord. In a moment, a handful of dust went so far to do what made the legion flee the battle-field.

وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ فَاِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَا لِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ - (المومن)

“And it behoves not that a messenger comes with a sign save by God's leave, so when God's behest comes, it shall be judged between them with equity and those who stickle with pertinacity shall be lost in perdition. (al Momin)

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْهَانِهِمْ لَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لَّيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهَا ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

(الانعام ع ١٣)

“And they swear a solemn oath by Allah that if there came unto them a portent, they will believe therein. Portents are with Allah and (so is) that which telleth you that if such came unto them they would not believe.”

(al Anaam verse 110)

This argument will appeal only to those who believe that the characteristics of any being are bestowed on it by a Bestower. They will then understand that the Creator of characteristics has given fire the quality to burn whatever comes in contact with it. This is the usual law. But it is not impossible that He should take away this quality from fire if He wishes to do so for any purpose.



The remains of Thamud in
AL-Hijr- (Madain Saleh)



The buildings cut in rocks.
Madin Saleh.



This place is claimed to be
The well of She - camel in
AL-Hijjr-(Madain Saleh)

This would, then, be looked as His special law.

Those people who look upon the characteristics of a thing as being inherent in it and, therefore, inseparable from it, should consider whether a thing that is dependent for its coming into being on some other power, can possibly possess any characteristic at its own and inseparable from it.

One, Khuda Baksh Kashmiri, gave a demonstration of fire-walking in London and USA and also made others walk on blazing fire. Scientists thoroughly inspected these men and admitted with astonishment that their skins were intact and no special protecting device had been used. They were unable to explain how this was possible. If such is our want of understanding when scientific knowledge has advanced so far, how does it become us to deny a miracle only because our eyes are not used to perceiving a thing without perceiving its cause.

The she-camel of Allah

Saleh continued to advise and warn his people the Thamud but they paid him no heed and would not renounce their idolatry. A few of them, however, did follow him and become Muslims, but the bigger chiefs and owners of wealth did not relent. Instead of thanking Allah for their blessings, they denied them as such. They would laugh at Saleh, saying that if they were not on the right path, followers of the right religion, how could they enjoy so much wealth, live in mansions, be owners of such large fields and so many cattle, green orchards, abundance of fruit and sweet water canals. And in contrast, there was, his miserable condition and that of his followers. Surely, they were the loved ones of Allah, not Saleh and his followers.

In answer, Saleh would tell them not to be deceived by their wealth and, in their arrogance, ridicule the true religion of Allah. Possessions can vanish in a moment. No doubt these things are His blessings provided their owners give thanks for them to their Provider and bow their heads to Him, but if these things cause arrogance and pride, and ingratitude, they become a curse. One should not think that every wealth and luxury comes because Allah is well pleased.

Thamud were also puzzled to think that a man from amongst themselves should claim to be a prophet.

"From among us does the reminder come down only on him?"

Meaning that if such were to happen, its rightful recipients were they, not Saleh. And they would ask the Muslim followers of Saleh.

أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا

“Are you certain that Saleh is a messenger from his Lord?”

And the Muslims would reply:

قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلَ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ

“There is no doubt that we are believers in his message.”

The deniers would then retort:

إِنَّا بِالذِّكْرِ آمَنَّا بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

“And there is no doubt that we are disbelievers of what you believe in.”

The unbelievers, adamant in their refusal to believe, demanded of Saleh a sign (miracle) by way of proof. Saleh prayed and being heard, he said to the people, that the sign demanded by them was a certain she-camel present before them. That they should do it no harm, otherwise a terrible doom would overtake them. And he told them that Allah had fixed alternate days for her and their animals to use the common water. This schedule must be strictly observed, he warned them.

The Qur'an speaks of this she-camel as that “Camel of Allah”². Of course, all

² Anecdotes relate that on being asked what sign would satisfy them, the Thamud said they would like to see a virgin she-camel emerge from the crevice of a certain yonder mountain. Consequently a she-camel emerged from it in full view of the people. It is also narrated that a woman offered her beautiful daughter to Qadaar as prize for his slaughtering the she-camel.

In this connection the Qur'an mentions only two incidents: that Saleh's people, the Thamud demanded a miracle from Saleh in proof of his Prophethood, that Saleh present a camel.

Second that Saleh had counseled the people that they must not injure the camel and must fix each alternate day at the water for the camel and one for themselves, and if they did it an injury, the very fact of so doing would be a sign. But they killed the camel and God's punishment befell them.

The rest depends on the Tradition sources and the Bible, or ancient historical lore. According to the ulema some of them are correct, some weak but as historical facts. Hafiz tells in his commentary of Surah e A'raaf what happened was that when the Thamud got fed up of Saleh's harranguing over his mission, their chief demanded that it was established before God that, he should produce proof as his credentials, such as a sign or miracle so that they may have faith in him. Saleh said, may it not happen that even after a sign has been shown to you, you may still not believe.

They answered that they would certainly have faith in him.

“What, then is the kind of miracle you want?” he asked them.

“You see that yonder.” They said, “produce a virgin she-camel from the rock embeded on its water coast and would give birth to a kid. Saleh prayed to God, and female camel emerged from rock and gave birth to a kid. One of their chiefs, Jinda bin Amru converted immediately. Others wanted to, but high priests of their temples

creation belongs to Allah but this particular one is so described by a title because she had come as a sign demanded by the people. The Qur'anic words,

Rubabbin Sifar stood in the way.

Saleh now told them this warning had been given on your own asking. Therefore, now be careful. The animals are to be watered on altered days. The camel and her kid one day and your animals the next. Some days passed in this way, but at last, they began getting fed up and wished to get rid of the camel so as to finish with the whole matter once for all. Although these used to be talk, none had the courage to kill it. When a beautiful woman Sadooq presented herself before Misda and another wealth woman Aneeza presented her beautiful girl before Kedar, saying that they could have both good-looking women in marriage on condition that the two might kill the she-camel. The two agreed and one day their men lay in ambush for the camel. This was done and it was also conspired that when the night grew dark they would also kill Saleh & his relatives, & would swear on Saleh's spiritual disciples that it was not our work. Wailing and bleating, the kid climbed up the hills and vanished.

Saleh was distressed when he heard all this and said to the people that, after all, what had happened was exactly what he had suspected and had told them that what would take place. "Now await three days for God's punishment which is bound to fall on you." Then came a thunder and the flash of lightning and the storm left destruction and for the living a lesson. Hafiz ibn Kathir has quoted several Traditions along with this event.

When during journey the Prophet ﷺ, passed by Hijr and the companions filled up their water bags, he ordered them to empty the vessels, throw the flour and, he said, to take nothing from that region because, this was the region where God's wrath came down on earth. None should rest here or try to benefit from here and that they move further and pitch camp over there, the People should pass this way with tears in eyes and fearing God lest they are visited by some curse.

Another Tradition narrates that when the Prophet ﷺ entered the Hijr he said, do not ask God for miracles. Reflect over Saleh's folk. It would come from the hills return to pasture and leaving enough of her milk for the Thamud return to the hills. But they rebelled and hamstringed and killed her. As a result a terrible wrath overtook them and they were found dead in their houses. Only one may named Aborghal who had gone to the Haram was left alive, but as soon as he came out of the Harem boundary he too died immediately.

Hafiz Ibn Kathir has quoted these Traditions from Masnad e Ahmed and ratified them.

(Tarikh e Ibn Kathir. Vol.1 , Pp.128-139)

We conclude that Allah's camel as a sign of Allah is proved by the Qur'an. It must have had some characteristic within itself to make it meritable for being mentioned in the Qur'an with such emphasis 'this is a sign of Allah for you'. Then the days for the water are alternately fixed is a sign itself of the camel's peculiar quality. But the Qur'an and the Prophet are silent over the manner in which the camel came into being, or what those characteristics were that made the camel worthy of being described as a camel of Allah, Ibn Kathir does throw some light on these subjects, that we have just stated but the detail is wanting there too. It is borrowed from Hebrew sources or weak narratives (*riwayah*).

Differences of possibility and detail should always be kept in mind. It is incumbent to believe without commentary what comes from the Qur'anic, and what comes from the narratives sources, even as should be acceptable as detail of ijmaal. The rest are no more and no less than ordinary history subjects or Hebrew literature.

لَكُمْ آيَةٌ

“A sign to you”, signify that she embodied in herself a special importance. But the unfortunate Thamud could not comply for long and conspiring among them persuaded one Kadar b Salif to be the first to kill it, and the rest would help him. This was done. When Saleh was informed, he told the people with tears in his eyes. “Accursed ones! You could not be patient! Now wait for Allah’s inevitable punishment which will befall you in three days and you will become extinct for ever.”

Syed Aaloosi writes in his commentary, *Rooh ul Ma’ani*, that the signs of the punishment commenced from the next morning when faces became pale as happens when fear overtakes one, by the following morning they became red, the second stage of fear; and by the last day, they had become black; after which the only stage is that of death.

The changed condition of the face shows that the people did believe in their heart of the truthfulness of Saleh, but their pride and stubbornness prevented them from acknowledging him. Then when they had committed the crime and heard of the terrible punishment now certain for them, they were convinced of impending death and their faces changed colour as happens with criminals facing certain death.

On the night following these three days, a terrifying howl arose which killed each of the unbelievers in the condition he was in. For such a fatal sound the Qur’an sometimes uses the word *saiqa*, the sound of thunder and lightning, and sometimes, *rajfa*, causing an earthquake, or *taghiya*, causing terror, or *sahatan*, a dreadful shout. The different sounds bringing about the same result show how varied Allah’s damnation can be. Imagine thunder and lightning, over one place, then, immediately after, over another, and yet another, and then the lightning falling with the accompaniment of a terror striking sound. This is only by way of conveying an idea of what must have befallen the Thamud so that it may be a reminder for coming generations.

It should be noted that Saleh and those who believed were saved. Saleh bemoaned after the desolation:

يَقَوْمٍ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ
لَا تَجِيبُونَ النَّاصِحِينَ -

“O my people! I brought you the message of my Lord and counseled you, but you did not befriend counselors.”

At times when our Prophet ﷺ was asked for signs, he would advise that such a demand should not be made lest the questioner remain adamant and the same fate befall him as befell the deniers of former prophets.

Saleh's bemoaning address was like the one that came from our Prophet ﷺ at the end of the Battle of Badr as he stood lamenting the slain lying before him, naming those he recognized.

يا فلان بن فلان و فلان بن فلان ايسرکم انکم اطعتم الله ورسوله
فانا قد وجدنا ما وعدنا ربنا حقاً فهل وجدتم ما وعد ربكم حقاً
(الحديث)

"Did you like obedience to your Allah and Prophet. We, verily, have received what our Lord promised us. Have you, too received what your Lord promised you? (Al-Hadees)

Such forms of address are not unusual with prophets. The dead hear their voice but cannot speak back as the Prophet ﷺ told Omer b. al Khattab, RA who asked him if the corpses were hearing the words.

The style expresses a regret. For instance, when you tell a person not to go into such and such garden although it is fascinating to look at and is full of fruit. It is infested with poisonous snakes, but the man does go and is fatally bitten and dies, upon which the Warner involuntarily exclaims, 'Did I not tell you to keep away from this garden or you will be bitten by a snake!'

But the real addressees of the address are the living who are intended to be warned so that they may not dare disbelieve the prophet.

It may be asked where the surviving Thamud migrated after the destruction of the unbelieving ones.

It is impossible to give a definite answer, but the likelihood is that they settled down in the environments of Ramlah in Palestine because this was the nearest to Hijr and was fertile and where abundant water and pasture lands were available.

This is according to Khazin but other scholars give different opinions that the Thamud came to Hadramaaut because this was their original homeland & it is a part of Ahqaf. There is also a grave here known to be that of the prophet Saleh. Another opinion is that they continued to live in the same land where the others were destroyed. This is according to most historians that they came to Makkah, lived & died here, and Saleh's grave is within the Harem, west of the Ka'ba. So Syed Aaloosi believes. He also quotes that there were but one-

hundred-and-twenty survivors who had become Muslims while the destroyed numbered about fifteen-hundred families.

The Qur'an sums up:

وَالِى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا، قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ، قَدْ جَاءَ تَكْمٌ بَيْنَهُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ، هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابُ آيَتِهِ (١) وَاذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَبَوَّأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْ سُهُولِهَا قُصُورًا وَتَنْحِتُونَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتًا، فَادْكُرُوا آيَةَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ (٢) قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعِفُوا لِمَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ آتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ صَالِحًا مُرْسَلٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلَ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ (٣) قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا بِالَّذِي آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ (٤) فَفَعَقُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُوا يُصَلِحُ آئِنًا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (٥) فَآخَذَ تَهُمُ الرِّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جِثِيمِينَ (٦) فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَاقَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ النَّصِيحِينَ (٧)

(اعراف ع ١٠)

"And to the (tribe of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Saleh. He said, O my people! Serve Allah. Ye have no other God save Him. A wonder from your Lord hath come unto you. Lo, this is the camel of Allah, a token unto you; so let her feed in Allah's earth, and touch her not with hurt lest painful torment seize you.

And remember how He made you viceroys after Aa'd and gave you a station in the earth. You chose castles in the plains and hewed the mountains into dwellings. So remember (all) the bounties of Allah and do no evil making mischief in the earth.

The chieftains of his people who were scornful said unto them whom they despised, unto such of them as believed,

Know you that Saleh is one sent from his Lord? They said Lo! in that wherewith he hath been sent we are believers.

Those who were scornful said, Lo! In that which you believe, we are disbelievers.

So they hamstrung the she-camel and they flouted the commandment of their Lord and they said, O Saleh bring on us that thou threatenst if thou art indeed of those sent (from Allah).

And Saleh turned from them and said. O my people! I delivered my Lord's message unto you and gave you good advice but ye love not good advisers. (Araaf, 73-79)

(٢) وَالِى تُمُودًا خَاهُمْ صِلِحًا قَالَ يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ؕ هُوَ اَنْشَاَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيْهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوْا اِلَيْهِ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ قَرِيْبٌ مُّجِيْبٌ (١) قَالُوْا يَصْلِحْ قَدْ كُنْتَ فِىْنَا مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ هٰذَا اَتَنْهٰنَا اَنْ نَّعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ اٰبَاؤُنَا وَاِنَّا لَفِىْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَآ اِلَيْهِ مُّرِيْبٍ (٢) قَالَ يَقَوْمِ اَرَاۤءَ اِنْ كُنْتُ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَبِّيْ وَاتَّبِعْتَنِ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ عَصَيْتُهُ ؕ فَمَا تَزِيْدُوْنِيْ غَيْرَ تَخْسِيْرٍ (٣) وَيَقَوْمِ هٰذِهِ نٰقَةٌ لِّكُمْ اٰيَةٌ فَذُرُوْهَا تَاْكُلْ فِىْ اَرْضِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا تَمْسُوْهَا بِسُوْءٍ فَيَاْخُذْكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيْبٌ (٤) فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَقَالَ تَمَتَّعُوْا فِىْ دَارِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ اَيّامٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ وَعَدُّ غَيْرِ مُّكَذُوْبٍ (٥) فَلَمَّا جَاءَ اَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا صِلِحًا وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهُۥ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَمِنْ خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيْزُ (٦) وَاَخَذَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا الصّٰحٰةَ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِىْ دِيَارِهِمْ جَثِيْمِيْنَ (٧) كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيْهَا ؕ اَلَا اِنَّ تُمُوْدًا كَفَرُوْا رَبَّهُمْ ؕ اَلَا بَعْدَ التَّمُوْدِ (٨)

(هود ع ٦)

And unto the (tribe of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Saleh. He said, O my people! Serve Allah; ye have no other God save Him. He brought you forth from the earth and hath made you husband it. So ask forgiveness of Him and turn unto Him repentant. Lo! My Lord is Nigh, Responsive.

They said, O Saleh! Thou has been among us hitherto as that wherein placed were hopes. Dost thou ask us not to worship what our fathers worshipped? Lo! We verily are in grave doubt concerning that to which thou callest us.

He said, O my people! Bethink you, if I am (acting) on clear proof from my Lord and there hath come unto me a mercy from Him, who will save me from Almighty if I disobey Him. You would add to me nothing but perdition.

O my people! This is the camel of Allah, a token unto you, so suffer her to feed in Allah's earth, and touch her not with harm lest a near torment seize you.

But they hamstrung her, and then he said, enjoy life in your dwelling places for three days! This is a threat that will not be belied.

So when Our commandment came to pass We saved Saleh and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us, from the ignominy of that day. Lo! thy Lord, He is the Strong, the Mighty!

And the awful cry overtook them who did wrong, so that morning found them prostrate in their dwellings.

As though they had not dwelt there. Lo! Thamud disbelieved in their Lord! A far removal for Thamud! (Houd 61-68)

(۳) وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ الْحِجْرِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (۱) وَأَتَيْنَهُمْ آيَاتِنَا
وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ (۲) وَكَانُوا يَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا
أَمِينًا (۳) فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُضْبِعِينَ (۴) فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (۵)
(حجر ع ۶)

And the dwellers in al Hijr indeed denied their messengers. And we gave them our revelations, but they were averse to them.

And they used to hew out dwellings from the hills (wherein they dwelt secure).

But the awful cry overtook them at the morning hour. And that which they were wont to count as gain availed them nothing. (Hijr 80-84)

(٤) كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (١) إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ صَالِحٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ (٢) إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ (٣) فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرًا وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٤) أَتُرْكُونَ فِي مَاهِنًا آمِنِينَ (٥) فِي جَنَّتٍ وَعَيْوُنٍ (٦) وَزُرُوعٍ وَنَخْلٍ طَلَعَتْ هَظِيمًا (٧) وَتَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا فَرِهِينَ (٨) فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرًا (٩) وَلَا تُطِيعُوا أَمْرَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ (١٠) الَّذِينَ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ (١١) قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ (١٢) مَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا فَأْتِ بآيَةٍ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ (١٣) قَالَ هَذِهِ نَاقَةٌ لَهَا شِرْبٌ وَلَكُمْ شِرْبُ يَوْمٍ مَعْلُومٍ (١٤) وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ (١٥) فَعَقَرُوهَا فَاصْبَحُوا نَدِيمِينَ (١٦) فَأَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (١٧) وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ (١٨)

(النمل ع ٣)

Thamud denied the messengers when their brother Saleh told them, I am a trusted messenger sent to you. So fear Allah and obey me. And I do not ask you any remuneration; my recompense is with the Sustaining Lord of all (Rab ul aalameen) Will you be left safe and sound here in orchards and canals, and fields and date-palms with tender bunches and luxurious houses carved out in the mountains? So fear Allah and obey me and pay no heed to those who make mischief in the land, not reform. They said, some one has cast a spell on you. You are being like us, so bring us a sign if you are truthful. He said here is a she-camel. She and your animals will drink the water on alternate days. Do her no harm lest punishment of a terrible day overtake you. But they hamstrung her and regressed, so damnation overtook them. There is in this a great portent, but many do not believe. And thy Lord is Glorious and Merciful.

(Namal R 3)

(٥) وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ فَاذَاهُم فَرِيقَانِ يَخْتَصِمُونَ (١) قَالَ يَوْمِ لِمَ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ لَوْلَا تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ (٢) قَالُوا اطَّيَّرْنَا بِكَ وَبِمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ طَيَّرَكُمْ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ تُفْتَنُونَ (٣) وَكَانَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ (٤) قَالُوا اتَّقَاسُمُوا بِاللَّهِ لِنَبِيِّنَا وَأَهْلِهَا ثُمَّ لَنَقُولَنَّ لِيَوْمِهِ مَا شَهِدْنَا مَهْلِكَ أَهْلِهِ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ (٥) وَمَكْرُؤًا مَكَرًا وَمَكْرُؤًا مَكَرًا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ (٦) فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ مَكْرِهِمْ أَنَا دَمَرْنَهُمْ وَقَوْمَهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ (٧) فَتِلْكَ يَبُوتُهُمْ خَاوِيَةٌ بِمَا ظَلَمُوا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ (٨) وَأَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ (٩) (النمل ٤٤)

And We verily sent unto Thamud their brother Saleh, saying, Worship Allah. And they became two parties quarreling.

He said, O my people! Why will you hasten on the evil rather than the good? Why will you not ask pardon of Allah, that you may receive mercy.

They said, We augur evil of thee and those with thee. He said, Your evil augury is with Allah, Nay but you are folk that are being tested.

And there were in the city nine persons who made mischief in the land and reformed not.

They said, Swear one to another by Allah that we verily will attack him and his household by night and afterward we will surely say unto his friends, We witnessed not the destruction of the household. And lo! We are truth-tellers.

So they plotted a plot and We plotted a plot, too while they perceived not.

Then see the consequence of the nature of their plotting, for, lo! We destroyed them and their people, every one.

See yonder are their dwellings empty and in ruins because they did wrong Lo! Herein indeed is a portent for a people who have knowledge. (Namal 45-52)

(٦) وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمَىٰ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ
صِعْقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُونِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ () وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ () (فصلت)

And the Thamud We showed them guidance, but they preferred to remain blind. So a terrifying sound of humiliation overtook them in return for what they earned, and We saved those who believed and were dutiful.

(Fussilat)

(٧) وَفِي ثَمُودَ إِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَمَتُّعُوا حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ () فَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ
رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّعِقَةُ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ () فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مِنْ قِيَامٍ
وَمَا كَانُوا مُتَّصِرِينَ () (الذاريات)

And there are signs in Thamud when We said to them, enjoy yourselves until an appointed time, but they disobeyed their Lord, so a terrifying thunderbolt overtook them while they saw it. Then they could not rise nor could they be helped."

(al Zariyat)

(٨) وَأَنَّهُ أَهْلَكَ عَادَ الْأُولَىٰ () وَثَمُودَ فَمَا أَبْقَىٰ () (النجم ٢٤)

And He destroyed the former (tribe of) Aad.

And (the tribe of) Thamud, He spared not. (Najm 50 & 51)

(٩) كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِالنُّذُرِ فَقَالُوا أَبَشْرًا مِّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَّتَّبِعُهُ ۗ إِنَّا إِذَا لَفِئَةٌ
ضَلِيلٍ وَسَعُرٍ () أَلْقَىٰ الذِّكْرُ عَلَيْهِ مِن بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشِرٌّ ()
سَيَعْلَمُونَ غَدًا مِّنَ الْكَذَّابِ الْأَشِيرِ () إِنَّا مُرْسِلُوا النَّاقَةَ فِتْنَةً لَهُمْ
فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ () وَنَبِّئْهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ كُلُّ شِرْبٍ
مُّحْتَضَرٌ () فَنَادَوْا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَتَعَاطَىٰ فَعَقَرَ () فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي
وَنُذْرِي () إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُحْتَظِرِ ()
وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدْكِرٍ () (القمر ٢٤)

(The tribe of) Thamud rejected warnings. For they said, Is it a mortal man, alone among us, that we are to follow? Then indeed we should fall in error and madness.

Hath the remembrance been given unto him alone among us? Nay, but he is a rash liar.

Lo We are sending the she-camel as a test for them, so watch them and have patience.

And inform them that the water is to be shared between her and them. Every drinking will be witness.

But they called their comrade and he took and hamstrung her.

Then see how (dreadful) was My punishment after My warnings.

Lo! We sent upon them one shout and they became as the dry twigs (rejected by) the builder of a cattle-fold.

And, in truth, We have made the Qur'an easy to remember, but is there any that remembereth. (Qamar 23-32)

(١٠) كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ وَعَادٌ بِأَقَارِعِهِ (١) فَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَأَهْلِكُوا بِلَطَاغِيَةٍ (٢)
(الحاقة ١٤)

The (tribe) of Thamud and A'ad disbelieved in the judgment to come.

As for Thamud, they were destroyed by the lightning.

And as for A'ad they were destroyed by a fierce, roaring wind. (al Haqqa 4-5)

(١١) كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا (٢) إِذِ انبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا (١) فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا (٣) فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا (٤) فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَحَسَّوهَا (٥) وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا (٦)
(الشمس)

(The tribe of) of Thamud denied (the truth) in their rebellious pride.

When the basest of them broke forth. And the messenger of Allah said, It is the she -camel of Allah, so let her drink.

But they denied him, and they hamstrung her, so Allah doomed them for their sin and razed (their dwellings). He dreadeth not the sequel (of events). (al Shams 11-15)

Allah's she-camel was a sign of the truth of Saleh being a messenger of Allah, and it proved also to be a sign of trial for the Thamud and, in consequence, of their destruction.

إِنَّا مُرْسِلُوا النَّاقَةَ فِتْنَةً لَهُمْ فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ (القمر ع ٣)

Lo! We are sending the she-camel as a test for them, so watch them and have patience. (al Qamar 27)

It is not always necessary that a people should be destroyed when Allah sends them a messenger and they do not believe in him. But if they demand a sign from him on condition that they will believe if he produces the sign and then they go back on their word, their destruction becomes inevitable. Allah does not forgive them until they repent and accept His religion or they are wiped away from the surface of this earth to become a lesson for others.

But the message of the Prophet ﷺ is an exception to this rule. He tells us that he had prayed to Allah that He may not send his punishment on his contemporaries and Allah had accepted his prayer. The Qur'an confirms:

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ -

Allah will not visit them (the unbelievers) with destruction while you are among them.

It is self-deception and a fatal mistake to think that he who possesses wealth, its pomp and grandeur must be in Allah's grace and His pleasure is with them because it often proves to be the cause of one's destruction. Although the time of respite given to nations may be indefinite, if luxury living is accompanied by pride and arrogance, tyranny and rebellion against Allah, the nation's final extinction, it should be understood, is at hand.

إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ

"Thy Lord's strangle-hold is very severe."

If with all the prosperity and amenities, there be present among the people many who are thankful to Allah, are fair and just to his creatures, their mutual dealings well motivated and they treat one another with sympathy and love, for them is the good news of success in this world and the Hereafter, and for them the possessions are a sign of true blessings.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ
 الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا ۗ يَعْبُدُونَنِي
 لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا
 (نور ع ٧)

Allah has promised such of you as believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed (the present rulers) in the earth even as he caused those who were before them to succeed (others), and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He hath approved for them, and will give them in exchange, safety after their fear. They serve Me, they ascribe nothing as partner unto Me. Those who disbelieve henceforth, they are the miscreants.

(al Noor 55)

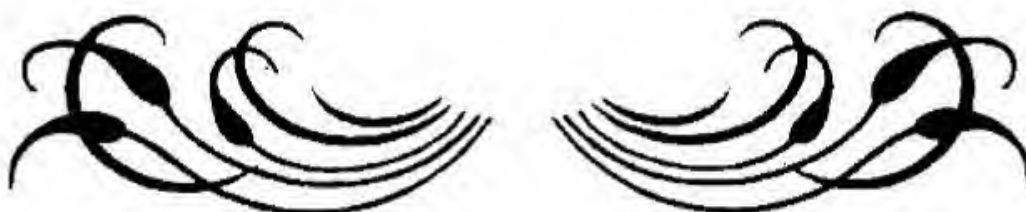
وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِن بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ
 الصَّالِحُونَ -
 (انبیاء ع ٧٤)

And verily We have written in the Scripture, after the Reminder, My righteous slaves will inherit the earth.

(al Anbiya 105)

These verses confirm that the promise of inheritance is only for those who are believers and being obedient to Allah's commands are among the doers of good. For them is rulership and wealth as Allah's reward and blessings.

Otherwise there is no distinction between believer and unbeliever. In His planning and strategy they are but shadows and it is not necessary that alongwith these things, rulership and prosperity and Allah's pleasure should also be included.



HAZRAT IBRAHIM ﷺ

Genealogy

The genealogy of this great prophet as given in the Old Testament is as follows:

Ibrahim (Khalil ul Lah), b. Terah, b. Nahor b. Serug b. Reu. Peleg b. Eber b. Salah b. Arphaxad b. Shem, b. Nooh (Noah). *(Genesis Ch. 11)*

This is according to history and Torah.¹

The Qur'an, however, gives his father's name as Aazar.

وَإِذَا قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ أَزْرَ اتَّخِذْ أَصْنَامًا لِلَّهِ ۗ (انعام)

"And recall when Ibrahim said to his father Aazar: Dost thou make gods of idols?" *(al An'aam)*

Because both history and the Old Testament give the father's name as Terah but the Qur'an as Aazar, the Ulema and commentators advise two ways of reconciling the difference.

1. Either make the two names correspond with one another or
2. By research discover which one of the two is correct; or that both are correct but are names of two different personalities.

Some believe that both are names of one man, the first, Terah is the name given at his birth and the other, Aazar, is descriptive name.

In Hebrew, Aazar means 'lover of idols,' and since the man was both a sculptors of statues as well as a worshipper of sculptural idols, he became known as Aazar. Others hold that Aazar means "a fool"², this descriptive name suited him well. The Qur'an uses the name as such.

In his Raudh ul Anaf, Mir Suhaylee has complied with this version³. The other school believes that Aazar was the name of the idol which Tarikh adored & of which he was the keeper. A Tradition from Mujahid (RA) states that this is

¹ Ibn Kathir Vol. 1 p 67

² Taj ul Uroos Vol. 3 p 12

³ Vol. 1.

the meaning of the Qur'anic words:

أَتَّخِذُ أَزْرًا إلهًا أَيْ اتَّخَذَ اصْنَامًا إلهة.

"Dost thou look upon Aazar as god?" That is, look upon idols as gods?

Saghani's opinion too is, more or less, the same. Only his grammatical style is different. Both believe that Aazar is not an alternative for Abih but an idol's name. Therefore the father's name is not mentioned in the Qur'an.

Another well-known version is that Terah is the name of Ibrahim's father and Aazar that of his uncle, and because the uncle had brought him up like his own offspring, the Qur'an uses his name as that of Ibrahim's father. As the Prophet ﷺ says,

العم صنو ابنيه

"The uncle is like the father".

Allama Abdul Wahab Najjar believes that Mujahid's version is more reliable because one of the idols of ancient times was named Aazar, which means Allah the Powerful and Certain. It has always been a custom among polytheists to name their new gods after the names of the old ones and the new god Aazar was named after that old Aazar, otherwise Ibrahim's father was Tarikh.

We believe that all this effort is needless. When the Qur'an tells us that Ibrahim's father was Aazar, there is no need to trouble ourselves with grammatical details and Biblical references and conjectures, even if Aazar means a lover of statues and idols, or was the name of an idol, we do not see why the man might not have been named as such for both reasons. Polytheists used often to name their children after the name of an idol or as "slaves" of such and such idol.

In Kaldi language Aazoor means "elderly worshipper", which is the meaning in Arabic also, because Terah was a sculptor and the biggest of idol worshipper he came to be known as Aazar. It was, thus, his title, not his name.

Ibrahim was of such high a moral stature that when his father disputed with him, saying:

أَرَاغِبُ أَنْتَ عَنِ الْإِهْتِي يَا بَرَاهِيمُ، لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَهَ لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ
وَأَهْجُرُنِي مَلِيًّا

"O Ibrahim, art thou revulsed by my gods? If thou wilt not give up this attitude, I will stone thee to death. So off from my sight."

Even in this heart-rending situation he gently replied:

سَلِّمْ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا

"May peace be upon thee! I will pray to my God to forgive thee. He verily is very kind to me," (Maryam)

Is it to be expected that such a son should address his father as a "fool" or a dotard"?

Thus without doubt, Aazar is the real name of Ibrahim's father and Terah is either a translation of Aazar, or, like other Biblical names, became permanently known as his name, losing its translation origin.

Marathshi, a Christian scholar of the 17th century has translated the Qur'an with extremely bigoted and foul remarks. He states that the word occurs in Usebious's history, Kanisa, which the Prophet ﷺ has forged into the Qur'an!

But Marathshi neither quotes the exact language of Kanisa nor gives the word from which the other word is derived, nor gives any reason why the Prophet should have felt the need for borrowing the word. His statement is, therefore, exclusively void of sense and logic or truth. How, then, can the family-tree traced as far as Noah be unambiguous?

The following is according to that given in the Old Testament. It may be, more or less, based on estimate and conjecture. When the Prophet's descent from Ibrahim is unambiguous, yet before Adnan the tree, here and there, is not so, (kazab ulnassaboon, as he himself described them), how can it be possible that between Ibrahim and Noah all the names should be complete and in order all the way up?

<i>Son's name</i>	<i>Father's name</i>	<i>Father's age at time of son's birth</i>
Shem	Noah	500
Arphaxad	Shem	100
Salah	Arphaxad	35
Eber	Salah	30
Peleg	Eber	34
Reu	Peleg	30
Seruj	Reu	32
Nahor	Seruj	30
Terah	Nahor	29
Ibrahim	Terah	70

Total number of yeas **890**

These statistics reveal the incorrectness of the Hebrew method. Their narratives are void of historical truth and respect for principles of recording.

There are orientalists whose criticisms of Islam border on the absurd. According to Da'iratul Muaarif ul Islamia quoting from Wensinek tells us that Sprenger was the first to assert that at first Ibrahim was not referred to in the Qur'an as the founder of the Ka'ba and a leader of a righteous religion but only later on was referred as such. Some time later, others developed this theme with commentary and argument. One of them wrote:

"Of all the Surahs originating in Makkah there is not one mentioning any relationship between Ibrahim and Ismail nor are they described as Muslims but only as prophets, nor is there a single verse to show that the two built the Ka'ba, or that Ibrahim was Ismail's father or an Arab prophet calling to the right religion. Surahs, Ankabut, al Zaariyaat, al Hajar, al Saafaat, al Anaam, Hoode, Maryam, Anmbiya are all Makki and prove our statement," This shows that before Muhammed^ﷺ no prophet appeared in Arabia, and that he was the first one in Arabia to claim prophethood.

"But when his Medina life begins, the Surahs now project Ibrahim in new light. The reason for this change is that the Prophet^ﷺ depended wholly on the Jews in every matter and admired their ways, and therefore, looked upon Ibrahim from their angle.

When on coming to Medina he invited the Jews to his religion, they refused his call and became hostile to him. Now he reflected and thought and his intelligence and innovative ability led him to lay the foundations of a religion quite separate from the Hebrew, which may be called Ibrahimic Hebrew. To complete this new faith. 'Ibrahim had to be presented in the Medina Surahs as guide to the right religion, prophet of Arabia, Ismail's father and builder of the Ka'ba...'"⁴

Such opinions are projected to prove the superiority of Christianity and denounce Islam, and, to show that Ibrahim had no religious or family connection with Arabia. But should an impartial historian study the subject, he will have to conclude that all such statements are groundless and far from the truth. These critics have selected only those Makki Surahs which refer to Ibrahim only as a prophet. They deliberately ignore that Makki Surah which is named after Ibrahim and dwells on his great virtues in detail. This is deliberate intellectual dishonesty to mislead people who do not themselves take the trouble to read the Qur'an!

⁴ Vol I pp 27-28; Het Mekhasnsch Feest

Surah e Ibrahim is Makki, revealed long before the migration to Medina and states the following about this great prophet:

1. He is in the Hijaz, well within Arabia and is seen praying for himself and his family and for the protection of the place against idolatry and that it may be a centre of peace for all the world;

رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ ()

"My Lord! Make safe this territory, and save me and my sons from serving idols" (13.35)

رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ أَضَلَّلَنَّا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ - فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي - وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ()

"My Lord! They have led many of mankind astray. But whoso followeth me, he verily is of me. And whoso disobeyeth me Still Thou art Forgiving, Merciful" (13. 36)

2. Ibrahim submits that the Hijaz (the very heart of Arabia) is inhabited by his children, that he has had it inhabited and he himself is the builder of Bait ul Haram, the Ka'ba.

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ
رَبَّنَا لِئَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ
مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ ()

"Our Lord! Lo! I have settled some of my posterity in an uncultivable valley near unto Thy Holy House; our Lord that they may establish proper worship, so incline some hearts of men that they may yearn toward them, and provide them with fruits in order that they may be thankful." (14:37)

3. Ibrahim is Ismail' s father and also of Ishaq, and Ismail is the forefather of all Arabs. He prays for establishment of the rituals of sala't, prayers.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ - إِنَّ رَبِّي
لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ
دُعَاءَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ()

"Praise be to Allah Who hath given me in my old age Ismael and Issac. Lo! My lord is, indeed, the Hearer of prayer! My Lord make me to establish proper worship and some of my posterity (also); our Lord and accept the prayer. Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and believers on the day when the account is cast.
(Ibrahim 30-41)

Are these words not that of a Makki Surah? Can any one after reading these Verses dare to endorse the absurd allegations made by the orientalisists of Europe which out of their ignorance or bigotry be doubted? Are these Verses not of Makki origin? And do they contain all that the Medina Surahs have?

Similarly, Surahs al Ana'am and al Namal are also Makki, showing clearly that Ibrahim did not subscribe to *shyrk* (associating partners with the Divine Being) but was a confirmed monotheist. Therein his personality as a missionary and iconoclast has been greatly high-lighted.

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا
مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ()

"Lo! I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not of the idolaters.
(al An'aam, 80)

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيمًا مِّلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ()

"Say: As for me, my Lord has guided me unto a straight path, right religion, the community of Ibrahim the Upright, who was no idolater."
(al An'aam 162)

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ()

"Lo! Ibrahim was a nation obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters."
(al Nahal 120)

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۖ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ ()

"And afterward We inspired thee (Muhammed), saying Follow the religion of Ibrahim, as one by nature upright. He was not of the idolaters.
(al Nahal 123)

Do these Verses not further refute the orientalist critics? Whether Makki Surahs or Madni, Ibrahim's personality appears the same throughout. In both, he is a missionary of the Upright religion, father of Ismail and the Arabs, founder and builder of the Ka'ba, guide and prophet of Arabia. For the orientalists to say that Ibrahim's personality is different in the Surahs of the two periods is downright false and calumny. It is also wrong to say that no prophet appeared in Arabia before Muhammed ﷺ because, besides, Ibrahim and Ismail, Hud and Salih are prophets of this very land.

So blinded are these orientalists by their prejudices that they forget that by falsifying the Qur'an on this subject they also falsify the Bible which clearly states that Ibrahim was Ismail's father, and Ismail is the forefather of the Arabs, that Arabia was inhabited by Ibrahim's descendants.

It is also absurd to say that the Prophet ﷺ followed Hebrew guidance, but on arriving in Medina and coming to face Jewish opposition, he invented a separate religion and called it *millat e Ibrahim*. The fact is that during his life in Makkah he never came across any Jews. It was only on coming to Medina that he came face to face with them. He was more inclined to them than he was to the idolaters. He was also a guide of the religion of Musa. Although this religion had been interpolated, its people, the Jews, were opposed to idolatry and, in spite of the corruption of the holy text, there still were passages in it foretelling his advent. Besides, too, there still were in it true Divinely inspired commandments of Allah, the real basis of the law of Musa.

For these reasons the Prophet thought that the Jews would accept Islam. But when he met with nothing from them but maliciousness, and refusal, his attitude towards them could only be what it was towards the idolaters.

Are Springer and those of his way of thinkers not clear a point or do they simply not wish to understand that since Ibrahim was Israel's (Jacob's) grandfather and the Jews very proudly trace their religion to Israel, is it not ridiculous for them to say that Ibrahim was a Jew? Is it sensible to say of a grandson's religion that his grandfather, long after he had passed away, was a follower of that religion?

That is why the Qur'an states:

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا ()

"Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Christian but he was upright and one who had surrendered to Allah."

These words have been taken by these bigoted, blind critics to mean that the Prophet ﷺ followed the religion of the Jews but in Medina invented his own religion. They also quote another Verse of the Qur'an to show that before

Muhammed ﷺ no prophet appeared in Arabia:

لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ

"That thou mayest warn a folk to whom there came no warner before."

But this is a mistaken arising out of ignorance of sufficient knowledge of the Arabic language, its grammar and style and the logical sequence of the arguments drawn up to refute the arguments produced by the polytheists.

The background will have to be kept in view. At the time of the revelation of this Verse, the greater part of Arabia was submerged in idolatry and when the Prophet ﷺ called them to worship only one God, Allah,

قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهَا آبَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا

"They said: We have found our forefathers on this (idol worship) and Allah has ordered us to it."

It was now necessary to tell them that "wrong religion" was different from "right religion". The right religion can be ascertained by an intellectual approach or by recorded narratives or both. If both these approaches are closed, such a religion is false and its claimant is a liar. The Qur'an has, therefore divided its Verses into three parts: one, to refute the arguments of the polytheists and expose the falseness of their claims. Thus to refute their assertion that Allah has commanded idolatry, Qur'an states categorically,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ()

"Allah does not enjoin absurdities and falsehood. Or do ye ascribe to Allah that of which ye know nothing?"

(al A'raaf 28)

The second category of Verses concern the intellectual approach to arrive at the conclusion that the false relations they have set up with Allah and on which they base their vaunted faith cannot be acceptable to intelligent people.

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمُ الرَّبُّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبَنُونَ () أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنَاثًا وَهُمْ

شَاهِدُونَ () أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ مِنْ أَفْكَهْمُ لَيَقُولُونَ () وَلَدَ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ

لَكَذِبُونَ () أَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِينَ () مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ

تَحْكُمُونَ () أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ()

"Ask them (O Prophet!) Hath thy Lord daughters whereas they have sons? Or created We the angels females, while they were present Lo! it is of their falsehood that they say. Allah hath begotten. And lo! verily, they tell a lie. (And again of their falsehood): He hath preferred daughters to sons. What aileth ye? How judge ye? Will ye not then reflect? Or have you a clear warrant? (al Sa'faat 149- 156)

The third category concerns the wrong authority they refer to in connection with their false beliefs. The Qur'an asks them whether they have a clear warrant from Allah in respect of what they say. Has a Book been sent down on them?

أَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطَنٌ مُّبِينٌ () فَآتُوا بِكُتُبِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ()

"Then produce your writ, if you are truthful".

(al Safaat 157)

If they have neither a conclusive, sensible argument, nor any authority to rely on, how far is it justifiable to state that they already had a religion of Allah and codified law as well?

A Verse from Surah e Ahqaf also refutes their claim in the same way.

أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مَنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ ۖ إِيْتُونِي بِكِتَابٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا
أَوْ آثَرَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ

"Say (unto them O Mmuhammad) : have you thought on all that you invoke beside Allah? Show me of what they have created of the earth. Or have they any portion in the earth? Bring me a Scripture before this (Scripture), or some vestige of knowledge (in support of what ye say) if ye are truthful.

(Ahqaaf 4)

In this way the Qur'an refutes the argument of the polytheists that there came to them any true prophet of the right religion. How could the Qur'an make any statement to the contrary when in a number of Surahs, such as Ibrahim, Namal, al An'aam, it clearly proves that Ibrahim and Ismail were Arab prophets. There are no contradictions in the Qur'an. It is the Word of Allah, Knower of the visible and the invisible, not of a human being subject to forgetfulness.

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ
اِخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

"Have they not reflected on the Qur'an? Had it been the word of any other than Allah they would have found many a discrepancy in it. "

Whatever Sprenger and other orientalisists like him have said is entirely baseless and downright malicious and bigoted. They are guilty of intellectual dishonesty, with the motive of misleading the world:

وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاءً.

"They (the unbelievers) desire that like them ye too beome disbelievers so that ye all may be the same. "

Muslims have always had one answer for them:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا.

"Our Lord! Incline not our hearts to unbelief after Thou has guided us "

Commentarors have also stated that such Verses refer only to those who lived during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ and have nothing to do with their forefathers and past history .

Ibrahim in the Qur'an:

The guidance projected by the Qur'an is , indeed, the message of the *millat* of Ibrahim and, therefore, he is mentioned in a number of places in its pages.

Surah	Times	Verses
Al-Baqar	2	124-127, 130-132, 133, 135, 136, 140, 258, 260
Aal e Imran	3	33, 65, 67, 68, 84, 95, 97
Al-Nisa	4	54, 125, 163
Al-An'aam	6	74, 75 83, 161
Al-Tauba	9	70, 114
Hud	11	69, 74, 75, 76
Ibrahim	14	35

Al-Nahal	16	120, 123
Al-Anmbiya	21	51, 60, 62, 69
Al Shu-ara	26	69
Al Ahzaab	33	7
Sa'ad	38	45
Al Zukhruf	43	26
Al Najam	53	37
Al Mumtahina	60	4
Yusuf	12	6, 38
Al Hajar	15	51
Maryam	19	41, 46, 58
Al Hajj	22	26, 43, 78
Al Ankabut	29	16, 31
Al Saafaat	37	83, 104, 109
Al Shura	42	13
Al Zariyaat	51	24
Al Hadeed	57	26
Al Aaa'la	87	19

Twenty-five Surahs and sixty-three Verses.

With Ibrahim are connected the names of several other prophets: Loot who is also his nephew as well as a disciple.; his sons Ismail and Isaac. Ibrahim was 87 years⁵ of age at the time of Ismail's birth and a hundred when Isaac was born⁶. His life span was a hundred-and-seventy-five years.⁷

Ibrahim's Stature:

The eminence that belongs to Ibrahim among the prophets is high-lighted in the Qur'an in several places, sometimes briefly, at others in detail, and yet

⁵ Isaiah 16 Takvin 16

⁶ Isaiah 15 Takvin 21

⁷ Isaiah 7 Takvin 25

others dwelling his great virtues. According to the Genesis, he belonged to Aur of the Chaldees. His people were polytheists and his father was a carpenter by profession who used to make wooden statues for a living.

But from the beginning, Ibrahim was blessed by the Lord and endowed with guidance and wisdom. He was convinced that statues and idols can neither hear nor see, nor answer anyone's call, nor cause harm or bring good. There was no difference between them and ordinary toys. He saw morning and evening that his father made these things, with his own hands, gave them whatever shape and faces he pleased, and then sold them. So could they possibly be gods? Or said to be equals to Allah?

As soon as he was established as prophet, he attended to this profanity.

The Qur'an:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهِ عَلِيمِينَ () إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ
 وَقَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ () قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا
 لَهَا عِبَادِينَ () قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ () قَالُوا
 أَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنْتَ مِنَ اللَّعِينِينَ () قَالَ بَلْ رَبُّكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ الَّذِي فَطَرَهُنَّ وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ ذَلِكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ()

"And We verily gave Ibrahim of old his proper course and We were aware of him. When he said unto his father and his folk: What are these which you pay devotion to? They said, We found our fathers worshippers of them. He said: Verily ye and your fathers were in plain error. They said, Bringest thou unto us the truth or art thou some jester?"

He said: Nay, but your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Who created them, and I am of those who testify unto that.
 (al Anmbiya 51 - 56)

As the blessings of Allah showered on Ibrahim, and he was appointed to an eminent place in the galaxy of Divine messengers, he made the mission of the upright religion the centre of his activity.

When he saw that his people were so engrossed in idolatry, worship of the stars and nature as well, that there was not even a vestige of Divine Unity in their hearts, there was nothing more astonishing for them than that Allah could be only One, he girded himself with courage to proclaim to them the religion of truth.

“What is this that I see? You make these idols with your own hands and then you worship them? And if they get spoilt in the making, you throw them away and make others to replace them and begin adoring them. Give up this stupidity, and sing praises to Allah the One and bow your heads to Him alone Who is my Creator and your Creator, Lord and Master of all the universe.”

But his people paid him no heed. Being deprived of the ability, the talent and the vision to see the truth, they ridiculed him.

Invitation to his father:

Ibrahim saw that the biggest centre of idolatry was his own house. His father Aazar's craftsmanship had made him the focus of every eye. It was, therefore, necessary that the beginning of the true faith should be made with him.

“O father!” he said, “the way you have chosen to seek Allah, which you say, is the way followed by your forefathers is the way of falsehood and straying away. The right way and guidance is that to which I call you. Unity of Allah is the fountain spring of salvation not the worship and service of the idols you make with your own hands. Renounce your way and firmly adopt the way of the One True Allah so that you may obtain His pleasure and the blessings of this life and of the Hereafter!”

But these words had no effect on his father. Instead, he began to threaten his son with stoning him to death, if the young man did not refrain from denouncing the idols. When Ibrahim saw that every limit had been crossed, and there was also, on one hand the need for courtesy to the old man and, on the other, the matter of vital principle, that of the Divine Being, he took the only course open to him. With great suaveness and civility he said. “If such be your reply then, I depart and may Peace be on you!”

“I cannot renounce Allah's religion of truth nor worship idols!” But though I go, I shall pray for you that Allah may forgive you, that you may receive His guidance and be saved from His punishment!

This is recorded in the Qur'an:

وَإِذْ كُنَّا فِي الْكُتُبِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ () إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا () إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ
يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْئًا () يَا أَبَتِ
إِنِّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ()
يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا () يَا أَبَتِ

إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا ()
 قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ أَنْتَ عَنِ الْهَيْئِ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ ؕ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَه لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ
 وَأَهْجُرَنِي مَلِيًّا () قَالَ سَلِّمْ عَلَيْكَ ؕ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي
 حَفِيًّا () وَأَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُوا رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا
 أَكُونَ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي شَقِيًّا ()

"And make mention (O Muhammad) in the Scripture of Ibrahim. Lo! he was a saint, a prophet. When he said unto his father, Why worshippest thou that which heareth not nor seeth, nor can it aught avail thee. O my father! Lo! There hath come unto me of knowledge that which came not unto thee. So follow me, and I will lead thee on a right path. O my father! Serve not the Devil. Lo! the devil is a rebel unto the Beneficent. O my father! Lo! I fear lest a punishment from the Beneficent overtake thee so that thou become a comrade of the devil. He said rejectest thou my gods, O Ibrahim? If thou cease not, I shall surely stone thee. Depart from me a long while. He said, Peace be unto thee! I shall ask forgiveness of my Lord for thee. Lo! He was ever gracious unto me. I shall withdraw from you and that unto which you pray beside Allah. And I shall pray unto my Lord. It may be that in prayer unto my Lord I shall not be unblest.

(Maryam 41 - 49.)

Ibrahim's advice to his father is further recorded in these words:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ إِزْرَ اتَّخِذْ أَصْنَامًا إِلَهَةً () إِنِّي أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ
 فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ()

"And when Ibrahim said unto his father, Dost thou take idols for your God? I see thee and thy people in plain error."

(al An'aam)

Invitation to the Nation:

When there remained no hope for reconciliation between the father and the son and Aazar did not accept the message from his son, Ibrahim parted from him and extended his preaching. Now his message was not only for his father but for whole the nation. But they were not ready to leave the religion of their

forefathers. They did not pay any heed to the invitation of Ibrahim and became blind deaf and dumb like their gods.

They had ears but were dumb for the voice of truth; they had got eyes but were deprived of vision of the right. They had tongue also but could not speak the words of truth.

لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا
يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ()

"They have hearts, but they do not comprehend with them; and they eyes, but they do not perceive with them; and they have ears, but they do not hear with them. They are like cattle; nay, they are even more perverse. Those are they neglectful."

And when Ibrahim stressed his inquiry, "Tell me whether these gods whom you worship, can give you any benefit or cause you any harm?" They replied, "We do not want to indulge in this debate. All we know is that our forefathers had been doing the same what we are doing now." On hearing this Ibrahim, for the sake of drawing their attention towards the True and Only Allah, adopted a peculiar style, saying, "I announce myself an enemy of your gods and declare was against them and am not afraid of them at all. If they can cause any harm let them do so. I only have faith in that Allah, Who is the Owner of whole the universe; Who created me and showed me the right path; Who gives me food; Who gives me health when I am ill; Who is the Lord of my life and death; Whom I desire to forgive me for my wrongs; to Whom I pray, "Oh my Lord! Give me the power to decide rightly and include me in the list of righteous people and give me a truthful tongue."

This is given in Surah e Shu-ara of the Qur'an:

وَآتَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ () إِذْ قَالَ لِأَيِّهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ () قَالُوا
نَعْبُدُ أَصْنَامًا فَنَنْظِلُ لَهَا عَافِيَةً () قَالَ هَلْ يَسْمَعُونَكُمْ إِذْ تَدْعُونَ ()
أَوْ يَنْفَعُونَكُمْ أَوْ يُضِرُّونَ () قَالُوا بَلْ وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا كَذَلِكَ
يَفْعَلُونَ () قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ () أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ الْأَقْدَمُونَ ()
فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّيَ إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ () الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ ()
وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ () وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ () وَالَّذِي

يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِي () وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ()
 رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَالْحَقِّنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ () وَاجْعَلْ لِي لِسَانَ
 صِدْقٍ فِي الْآخِرِينَ () وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنْ وَرَثَةِ الْجَنَّةِ النَّعِيمِ () وَاعْفِرْ لِأَبِي
 إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ () وَلَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ () يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ
 وَلَا بَنُونَ () إِلَّا مَنْ آتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ()

"Recite unto them the story of Ibrahim. When he said unto his father and his folk. What worship ye? They said: We worship idols and are ever devoted unto them. He said. Do they hear you when ye cry? Or do they benefit or harm you? They said. Nay but we found our fathers acting on this practice. He said. See now that which ye worship, ye and your forefathers! Lo! They are all an enemy unto me, save the Lord of the worlds, Who created me and Who doth guide me; and Who feedeth me and watereth me. And when I sicken He healeth me, and Who causeth me to die, then giveth me life (again). And Who, I ardently hope, will forgive me my sins on the Day of Judgment. My Lord! Vouchsafe me wisdom and unite me to the righteous! And give me a good report in later generations; and place me among the inheritors of the Garden of Delight. And forgive my father. LO! He is among those who err. And abase me not on the day when they are raised, the Day when wealth and sons avail not (any man), save one who bringeth unto Allah a whole heart"

(Verses 69-89)

But Aazar's heart and his people would not soften.

We have mentioned in the previous pages that Ibrahim's people used also to worship stars. They believed that life and death, the seasons, famine and abundance, victory and defeat, the universe and its system work according to the movement of the stars. This influence is intrinsic in their nature. Therefore, it is necessary to please them, and this is not possible without worshipping them.

Ibrahim, therefore, considered it necessary that just as he had tried to expose the facts about their earthly gods he should also draw their attention to the falsity of their gods in the skies. He pointed to the temporary nature of the stars and planets. These shining things, the sun and the moon and such did not possess divine powers. But the people overawed by gods made by their own hands and believing that he who spoke ill of them would be destroyed by their



The ziggurats, which were used both as temples and astronomical observatories, were constructions made with the most advanced techniques of the age. The stars, the moon and the sun were the primary objects of worship, and therefore, the sky had great importance. Left and below are the important ziggurats of Mesopotamia.



anger, could hardly be expected to think better of those up in the skies. It was not easy to create in them feelings against them. Ibrahim approached them according to their intellectual level with an unusual argument.

It was a starful night and one of the stars shone brighter than the others. Pointing to it he proclaimed, 'This is my Providential Lord. If stars can provide sustenance, then, surely, this one being the brightest deserved the most adoration. But when it set at its appointed time, and could not dare show itself for a moment more than the time fixed for it for the benefit of its worshippers. Ibrahim declared, "I do not like a Allah that hides itself," implying that something which is subject to far quicker changes than he was, could not possibly be his Allah.

Then he saw the full moon shining bright in all its beauty, and he said, "This is my Sustaining Lord!" It was brighter and bigger and illumined the whole world. If stars were to be made gods, then the moon appeared to have the greater right to be Allah.

But not much later approached the morning twilight and the nearer came the dawn the dimmer got the moon and less and less bright until it vanished. Ibrahim now spoke words that would embed his objective in their minds without their being conscious of it, namely, faith in the One True Allah. He said: "If my Lord had not guided me I too should have been one of the erring folk" Not a word more because there was one more link to the chain of arguments, and the people too had a ready answer for it. It was, therefore, not proper to say more.

The starful night came to an end, the moon and the stars disappeared from sight. The sun was coming up and soon was dazzling in the skies. Ibrahim said, "This is my Allah because of all the heavenly bodies it is the biggest." But gradually the day too came to an end, the sun having brightened the world all day began to sink beyond Iraq; night began to approach and the sun too vanished from sight.

And now Ibrahim thought it was ripe time to convey the real message and render the people speechless. The shining bodies in the skies were subject to far greater changes and kept appearing and disappearing in them, why did they set and sink? Why did they discontinue to shine. Why did the moon dim the light of the stars and why did the sun take away the light of the moon "I, therefore, exculpate myself from all associating with the True One Allah (mushrik beliefs). I have turned my face towards the One True and only Creator of the heavens and the earth. I am upright (hanif) and not a

polytheist.”⁸

Now the folk understood that Ibrahim had blunted all their weapons, and defeated their arguments. They began to think of ways to counteract; how to answer his apparently incontestable argument, and finding no words began to threaten him that their gods would certainly punish him for his insolence.

Ibrahim said, “Are you trying to intimidate me and frighten me with your gods? The one true Allah has shown me the path of truth while you have nothing but stray wandering about. I care nothing for your idols. Only what my Lord wishes will take place; your idols can do nothing. Have you not been able to derive any guidance from my argument and counsel? You do not seem to be afraid of disobeying Allah and ascribing partners to Him for which you cannot advance even one reason, and you expect that a believer of Allah the One and responsible for the peace of the world should be afraid of idols. If only you could understand who is the mischievous one and who a lover of peace!”

Real peace is only for him who has faith in Allah -as- One, and abhors duality; he alone is on the right path.

Such was the argument, which, next to his mission and guidance, Allah the High endowed Ibrahim with to contest star worships and emerges victorious.

We have in Surah e al An-aam:

وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونُ مِنَ
 الْمُتَّقِينَ () فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ
 قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْإِفْلِينَ () فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِعًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ
 قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ () فَلَمَّا رَأَى
 الشَّمْسَ بَازِعَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَقَوْمِ إِنِّي
 بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ () إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ () وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ
 اتَّخَذْتُمُونِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَن

⁸ The Qur'an does not mention if this dialogue took place on one single night. If this is so, the night must have been one when the moon rises late and then set.

يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ () وَكَيْفَ
 أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرِكُكُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ
 عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَإِنَّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ () الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ()
 وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ
 رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

"Then did We show Ibrahim the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty. When the night grew dark upon him he beheld a star. He said, This is my Lord, but when it set, he said, I love not things that set. And when he saw the moon uprising, he reclaimed, This is my Lord, but when it set, he said, Unless my Lord guide me, I surely shall become one of the folk who are astray. And when he saw the sun uprising, he cried, This is my Lord. This greater! And when it set, he exclaimed, O my people! I am free from all that you associate (with Him). Lo! I have turned my face towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not one of the idolaters. His people argued with him. He said dispute ye with me concerning Allah when He hath guided me? I fear not at all that which ye set beside Him unless my Lord willeth. My Lord includeth all beings in His knowledge; will ye not then remember? How should I fear that which you set up beside Him when ye fear not to set beside Allah that for which He hath revealed unto you no warrant? Which of the two factions hath more right to safety? (Answer me that) if ye have knowledge. Those who believe and obscure not their belief by wrong doing, theirs is safety and they are rightly guided. That is Our argument. We gave it unto Ibrahim against his folk. We raise unto degrees of wisdom whom We will. Lo! Thy Lord is Wise, Aware!

(V 76-84)

Although the ulema unanimously agree that Ibrahim never in his life worshipped stars, his life was always free of polytheism, they have certain differences in their commentaries on these words. What has been stated here is one of the views, namely, that Ibrahim's dialogue was for the purpose of

dumbfounding his people. Presenting an argument is one of the ways of convincing a party holding discreet opinions, theories alone are not always convincing enough. Visible proof is more effective in silencing the opponent, who may, then, admit the truth, provided he has the capacity for it. The truth, then, comes to the surface, clearly visible. Otherwise he comes down to wrangling.

Ibrahim was a great prophet. Therefore, his mission was not based on low arguments but on presenting natural proof, and this is his distinguishing status. It was his adopted style of preaching. Stars and planets are not fit to be lords of providence. Providence is He alone Who is sustaining Lord of the entire universe, He alone is the Creator and Owner of it. Although the people began wrangling, their conscience knew that whatever Ibrahim had said was the truth and they had no counter argument. This was Ibrahim's purpose, the limit of his missionary way, for, it was beyond his power physically to force the truth into their hearts.

After this commentary the Qur'anic Verses require further interpretation. The context of the verses relevant to the heavenly bodies fully confirms this. For example:

إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ أَرَأَيْتَ أَتَّخِذُ أَصْنَامًا إِلَهَةً إِنِّي أَرَاكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ () وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ ()

"(Remember) when Ibrahim said unto his father Aazar, Takest thou idols for god? Lo! I see thee and thy folk in error manifest. Thus did We show Ibrahim the Kingdoms of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty." (V. 75, 76)

From these words we derive the following conclusion;

1. The argument took place when Ibrahim was engaged in his missionary work addressing his father and the people. Beginning the second Verse with the words *fa-ka-zaalika* is to imply this meaning is; and the third Verse with *fa* shows, that it is connected with the second Verse, the three, then, being interconnected.
2. Just as Allah had furnished Ibrahim with convincing arguments against idol-worship so as to silence the people and show them the path of truth, so He also showed him the kingdom of the heavens and the earth so that in this connection also he may, by the best of arguments, show them the right path and silence their dispute.

In the Verse pertaining to the setting of the sun are the words:

قَالَ يَقَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيٌّ مِّمَّا تُمَشِّرُونَ

"(Ibrahim) said, I am not one of the mushrikeen (of those who associate partners with Allah)

And together is the counsel:

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا
مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ()

"I have turned my face toward Him who created the heavens and the earth and I am by nature upright (hanif) and am not one of the idolaters."

And in the next Verse we have:

وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحَاجُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ

"And his people argued with him. He said 'Do ye dispute with me concerning Allah?'"

And in the 1st Verse we have:

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ نَّشَاءٍ ۗ إِنَّ
رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ()

"That is Our argument. We gave it unto Ibrahim against his folk. We raise unto degrees of wisdom whom We will. Verily thy Lord is Wise, the Aware!."

We derive the conclusion:- that the subject of the heavenly bodies, sun and moon and stars, was very relevant to the people of the time. This is the reason Ibrahim addressed the people instead of himself. So the people began to quarrel with him.

Allah describes the argument as His endowment on Ibrahim and that Ibrahim's status is very high. The people stand in great need of his guidance.

Allah has also said about Ibrahim:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهِ عَلِيمِينَ ()

"And We verily gave Ibrahim of old his proper course, and We were aware of him." (Al Anbiya R5 Vere 51)

This could not be an event of the time of Ibrahim's adolescence nor the words of his own thinking.

It was, indeed, a formidable argument from Ibrahim's side against the idolaters, that it was a great error to worship stars, build temples for them, and name them after the names of their gods. All heavenly bodies were bound together in one system, subject to changes with the changes in night and day. The Lord and Creator of this system is only He in Whose hand is the power to make them serve.

لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ (١)

"It is neither for the sun to over power the moon, nor for the night to overtake the day."

When the people still refused to accept Islam and clung to idol worship, Ibrahim openly declared war, saying "I will now pursue a stratagem with your idols that will nonplus you."

وَتَاللَّهِ لَأَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَامَكُمْ بَعْدَ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا مُدْبِرِينَ (٢)

"And by Allah! I shall circumvent your idols after you have gone away and turned your backs." (Anbiya R. 5 Verse 57)

A festival was due in a few days at which people made offerings of various kinds of food and drinks to their idols then held a fair to make merry, and enjoy themselves in the usual pagan ways. When the day came they set out from their homes and some of them asked Ibrahim to go along with them but he refused on the excuse of being indisposed. They thought that he was under the curse of some of their gods, perhaps, a star, or stars, and they left him.

فَنظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ (٣) فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ (٤) فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ (٥)

"And he glanced a glance at the stars, then said, Lo! I feel sick. And they turned their backs and went away from him."

(al-Safat R 29 Verses 88,89)

When they were away at the fair, their king and their chiefs, he went into their main temple and seeing the fruit and other luxurious foods, addressed them, saying, "Why don't you eat these superb things?" And getting no answer, asked why they did not reply. He, then, set about to breaking them one by one, leaving the biggest of them untouched and placing a hatchet on its shoulder.

فَرَاغَ إِلَى إِلِهِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ (٦) مَا لَكُمْ لَّا تَنْطِقُونَ (٧)

*“Then turned he to their gods and said, Will ye not eat?
What aileth you that ye speak not? (al Safat R 3 Verse 91)*

When the people returned from the fair, and went into the temple they were surprised and enraged to see its condition. Among them were some who recognized Ibrahim as the man who had spoken the words

تَاللّٰهِ لَآ كَيْدَنَّ اَصْنَامَكُمْ

And they said that this must be his work. “It is he who is the enemy of our gods.”

قَالُوا مَنْ فَعَلَ هٰذَا بِالِهَتِنَا اِنَّهُ لِمِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ () قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى
يَذْكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ ()

“They said, who hath done this to our gods? Surely it must be some evil-doer. They said, “We heard a youth make mention of them who is called Ibrahim.”

(al Anbiya R 5. Verses 58,59.)

When the chiefs and priests heard this they were furious, saying that he should be caught and brought before the crowd so that everyone might see this criminal. When he was brought before them they asked him why he had done this to their gods.

قَالُوا فَاتُّوا بِهٖ عَلَىٰ اَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُوْنَ قَالُوا اَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ
هٰذَا بِالِهَتِنَا يَا اِبْرٰهِيْمُ ()

They said, “Is it thou who hast done this to our gods?”!

Ibrahim recognized his moment of opportunity. The masses were seeing the deplorable condition of their gods. It was time to humble their priests about their utterly false beliefs. He said, “Ask your big Allah, surely he should know. It seems to me to be his handiwork!” He thought that these words would expose the fraud and hypocrisy of their priests since idols can neither hear nor speak. The way to preach his mission would now be clear, he surmised. How ashamed the priests and idol worshippers would now be!

قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيْرُهُمْ هٰذَا فَاَسْئَلُوْهُمْ اِنْ كَانُوْا يَنْطِقُوْنَ ()

"He said. But this their chief hath done it. So question them, if they can speak."
(al Anbiya R 5)

What could possibly be the response of the priests? They were too ashamed to say a word, lost in thought as to how to answer. They too understood; they saw with their own eyes a spectacle they had never dreamt of seeing. Everyone, big and small, had to acknowledge in his heart that it was not Ibrahim but they who had all along been in the wrong! With heads bowed, they confessed "Ibrahim, you know very well that images made of stone or wood do not speak."

فَرَجَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ () ثُمَّ نَكِسُوا عَلَىٰ رُءُوسِهِمْ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا هَؤُلَاءِ يَنْطِقُونَ ()

"Then gathered they apart and said: Lo! You yourselves are the wrong-doers. And they were utterly confounded, and they said, Well thou knowest that they speak not."

(AL ANBIYA r 5 Verse 61)

This is how Ibrahim's disputation with idolaters came to an end. And now Ibrahim gave them a brief admonition. "Surely, you should understand that they who can neither hear nor speak must be unable to profit or injure, and, therefore, how can they be gods?"

أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَّا يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ () أَفْ لَكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ()

"He said, Worship ye, then, instead of Allah that which cannot profit you at all, nor harm you? Fie on you and all that you worship beside Allah? Have ye then no sense?"

(Vere 67 al Safat R 3)

فَاقْبَلُوا إِلَيْهِ يَزِفُونَ () قَالَ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْحِتُونَ () وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ()

"And (his people) came towards him hastening. He said, Worship ye that which ye yourselves do carve when it is Allah who hath created you and what ye make."

(Verses 92-96)

The effect of Ibrahim's counsel and success should now have been that the whole nation repented, renounced its false beliefs and crooked ways and took the straight path; instead, the crookedness of their hearts, rebellious nature of their souls, stubbornness and arrogance of the mind did not permit them to retract. And every single one of them declared his hostility to Ibrahim. They said to one another that Ibrahim must be punished for his insolence and criminal deed: he should be burnt alive so that his straight-path mission must be put to an end once for all.

Invitation to the King:

The incident reached the metropolis from where Namrud, who was then king, ruled Iraq. Kings too in those days claimed divinity and they looked upon them as their lord-gods, the same as their other gods, worshipping them in the same manner but with greater reverence because they possessed intelligence and also crown and throne.

When Mamrud heard of it all, he thought that if Ibrahim's mission continued, he might succeed in stirring up the people against him, and, together with the religion of their forefathers, the monarchy too would go into decline. It was, therefore, wise to put an end to the whole movement at the very beginning.

He ordered Ibrahim to be brought before him. When Ibrahim arrived, Mamrud began the conversation by asking him:

"Why do you contradict the religion of your fathers and why do you refuse to look upon me as your Allah?" Ibrahim replied:

"I worship the One True Allah, the One and Only. I associate none as partner with Him; the whole universe is His creation. You too are a human being, just as we all are human beings. Thus how can you be Allah and lord? And how can these idols, made of wood, deaf and dumb be gods? I am on the right path and all of you are on the wrong path. How, then, can I give up my mission? And how can I accept the faith of your fathers and forefathers?"

Mamrud asked, "If you have any Allah besides me, state some attribute of his which I do not possess."

Ibrahim said: "My Lord is He Who gives life and Who gives death".

Mamrud said: "I too have so much power" and he ordered the executioner to behead an innocent man. The order was carried out immediately. Then Mamrud ordered that a prisoner under sentence of death be set free. This too was done. The foolish king said to Ibrahim: "You have seen that I have the power to give death or life, as I please; where then is any special distinction of your Allah?"

Ibrahim saw that Mamrud was ignorant of the real meaning of 'giving life and death', or that he wished his subjects to remain ignorant of the difference. This is not what is implied by giving life, that is, being, nor is hanging or beheading, death or non-being. The Lord of death is He Who takes away a soul from the body and moves it to the possession of his own hands. Many a one beheaded or killed by the sword lives and many a one saved from being killed or executed comes to death and no power can save them. If this were otherwise, Mamrud would not have been king, and his first ancestor-monarch would still have been ruling. No one knows how many were buried under ground in this kingdom of Iraq, and how many yet had to go the same way!

Ibrahim did not think it wise to continue the discussion on the subject of life and death, because thereby the masses would only fall into confusion and discussion and debate was not his purpose. His sole purpose was to impress into the hearts the glory of the One Allah and faith in Him. He changed his line to one, which the people saw with their eyes everyday. He said, "I believe in that Allah Who causes the sun to come out of the east and set in the west, So, if you are Allah cause the sun to rise in the west and set in the east!"

Mamrud was stupefied. He could no longer remain in doubt. This was because the sum total of Ibrahim's argument was that he believed that Allah is He who as created the entire working of the universe and his Allah so controlled it by the laws of His wisdom that nothing could move even the slightest from its appointed time or place. Reflect on the sun, how many benefits the earth and the rest of the solar system derive from it; even so Allah has fixed the timings of its rising and setting. The sun has no power of its own to move away from such timing. That is because it is controlled by Allah's hand. Allah can do whatever He wishes to do, but He does only what His wisdom determines.

Mamrud could have given only three answers. Either that he had full control over the sun or he himself created the entire universal system. But he did not say so because he himself did not believe it.

Or he could say that he did not acknowledge that the universe was any one's creation and the sun itself was permanent Allah. If he said so, the people would be reminded of Ibrahim's first argument, namely, that if the sun was Allah, worthy of worship why was it subject to death and more changes than its worshippers? Was it within its power to rise or set whenever it pleased?

Or he could have accepted Ibrahim's challenge and brought the sun out from the west. But because it was not in his power to the recourse to any of these

three ways what else could he do but get stupefied.¹⁰

This is given briefly in the Qur'an:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ
إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ
الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

"(Bethink thee of him who had an argument with Ibrahim about his Lord because Allah had given him the kingdom, how, when Ibrahim said, My Lord is He Who giveth life and causeth death, he answered, I give life and cause death. Ibrahim said, Lo! Allah causeth the sun to rise in the East, so do thou cause it to rise in the West. Thus was the disbeliever abashed. And Allah guideth not wrong-doing folk."
(Surah e Baqar R35)

In brief, Ibrahim began his mission first with his father, inviting him to Islam, proclaimed the message of truth and showed him the path: next he extended the invitation to the people, and presented his arguments based on natural principles and reasoned to make them accept the truth, presenting them with tenderness, sweetness of tone but firmness and clarity of logic.

Finally, he came face to face with the king and made it clear to him that Divinity and Lordship belongs to the One True Allah. All the earth and whatsoever in it is His creation and bound by His endowed law of being and non-being.

¹⁰ Christian scholars and Arya Samajists blindly following them have raised the objection that if Namrud had retorted that Ibrahim! ask your God to cause the sun to rise from the west, what possible answer could he would have given. The objection is superficial. Had Mamrud challenged Ibrahim in these words, he would be admitting that he himself was not god and also that the sun was not their god. Nor did he have the power to accept Ibrahim's challenge. Mamrud, therefore, preferred silence.

Besides, Ibrahim believed that Allah would not put His prophet to shame and, in such a situation, He would cause the sun to come up from the west. Such an event would have been surprising, but not for those who believe that the heavenly bodies are bound in a definite system, not because of any intrinsic power of their own but by the Power of some other Being exalted above all things, and the intrinsic qualities are of His creation, therefore, if He wishes, He can alter their qualities or destroy them utterly. This Absolute Lord is Allah.

At this stage the verbal discussion had forever been concluded. In its place there was now to be physical force from the side of Polytheists. The people and their ruler were his sworn enemies; there was talk of opposition on all sides and slogans of enmity; with hatred and contempt, intentions of a dreadful punishment and revenge. Who was there to help him and how was any support to be made available?

Ibrahim neither cared nor was he afraid. As before, he continued with his mission, his invitation to the path of truth. But at such a time too when he had no material support he did have one support, a 'tremendous support'. Known as the support of supports, Helper of all help Allah the One. He did not leave the great prophet and guide of the people forsaken, he turned into dust every plan of the enemies. A huge furnaces was set up in which fire was kept blazing for several days and nights and the heat generated was seen to burn nearby things, the king and his subjects convinced that there was not a chance of Ibrahim escaping from it, they seated him in a gophan? And threw him into the blazing flames. That very instant, the All-Powerful Extinguisher of the elof fire commanded the fire to turn cold and safety and peace for Ibrahim! And the fire was cold and peace!

And Ibrahim came out of the extinguished furnace safe and unscared.

A religious person will believe all this as true because he has learnt by his intelligence and intuition that the knowledge coming from the Qur'an is knowledge from Divine inspiration and the prophet-medium that knowledge comes is altogether prophet's innocence. The knowledge of miracles he conveys to us may be astonishing to our intelligence but not impossible to understand. The integrity of the messenger has been tested from all angles. News of this kind is, without doubt correct and, as Herades said, the man who does not lie to people, never deceives, can never attribute to Allah any false words, never dare lie about Allah. And it, is the straight path that some things spoken by a religion that has been tested on the anvil of intelligence and found satisfactory may seem astonishing but not impossible, have faith in it without philosophic hair-splitting. The message conveyed by the Prophet^ﷺ looked upon as brighter than the sun have the faith that the All powerful Being Who possesses the power to create qualities in things also possesses the power to take away from it, whenever He pleases, any of those qualities. But although this path may not be found satisfactory by some philosophers, who may not let this method of religious inquiry to remain free of hair-splitting, for them, too, this miracle cannot be impossible, because it is an admitted fact that fire burns, but there are materials known as fire-proof which cannot be consumed by fire.

It might be said that fire retains its burning quality, it is the material that is chemically altered so that fire does not affect it. To this a religious minded man can retort that Mamrud's fire retained its consuming quality properly but it proved ineffective on Ibrahim. The only difference is that human hands treat fireproof material. And any human being may learn the scientific technology of it while flesh remaining unaffected was directly the work of Allah. Such work of Allah is proof of His prophet's truthfulness and sometimes for good reason becomes visible to show the prophet's superiority above his enemies. In Shariah this is known as a miracle. It is neither a craft nor the product of available material. If Allah's created humans have the power to render the natural properties of a material ineffective, why, on some special occasion, may Allah the Creator not show His power to prevent the properties of a material from having effect?

If today, science has discovered that there are gases present in the atmosphere which can prevent fire from scalding the skin, who can prevent Allah the Creator of gases from keeping a fire away from reaching anyone converting it into safety and peace?

The Qur'an:

قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَعِلِينَ (قُلْنَا يَنَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ) وَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَخْسَرِينَ ()

"They said, 'Burn him and stand up for your gods, if you will do so.' We said, 'O fire, be you a coolness and a safety for Ibrahim.' And they desired to continue against him, but we made them the worst losers. (al Anbiya R 5)

قَالُوا ابْنُوا لَهُ بُيُوتًا فَأَلْقُوهُ فِي الْحَيِّمِ () فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ () وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ()

"They said, 'Build up for him a building, then fling him into the blazing flame'. And they designed a trap for him, but we made them the lowest. And he said, 'I am going to my Lord; surely He will guide me.' (al Safat 37, V. 97-99)

Bukhari: According to the Qur'an when a dialogue was going on between Ibrahim and some polytheists who asked him to go with them to the fair, he excused himself by saying, "I am indisposed". And when he was questioned about the breaking of the images he said,

Even in this heart-rending situation he gently replied:

سَلِّمْ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا

"May peace be upon thee! I will pray to my God to forgive thee. He verily is very kind to me." (Maryam)

Is it to be expected that such a son should address his father as a "fool" or a dotard"?

Thus without doubt, Aazar is the real name of Ibrahim's father and Terah is either a translation of Aazar, or, like other Biblical names, became permanently known as his name, losing its translation origin.

Marathshi, a Christian scholar of the 17th century has translated the Qur'an with extremely bigoted and foul remarks. He states that the word occurs in Usebious's history, Kanisa, which the Prophet ﷺ has forged into the Qur'an!

But Marathshi neither quotes the exact language of Kanisa nor gives the word from which the other word is derived, nor gives any reason why the Prophet should have felt the need for borrowing the word. His statement is, therefore, exclusively void of sense and logic or truth. How, then, can the family-tree traced as far as Noah be unambiguous?

The followingng is according to that given in the Old Testament. It may be, more or less, based on estimate and conjecture. When the Prophet's descent from Ibrahim is unambiguous, yet before Adnan the tree, here and there, is not so, (kazab ulnassaboon, as he himself described them), how can it be possible that between Ibrahim and Noah all the names should be complete and in order all the way up?

<i>Son's name</i>	<i>Father's name</i>	<i>Father's age at time of son's birth</i>
Shem	Noah	500
Arphaxad	Shem	100
Salah	Arphaxad	35
Eber	Salah	30
Peleg	Eber	34
Reu	Peleg	30
Seruj	Reu	32
Nahor	Seruj	30
Terah	Nahor	29
Ibrahim	Terah	70
Total number of yeas		890

These statistics reveal the incorrectness of the Hebrew method. Their narratives are void of historical truth and respect for principles of recording.

There are orientalist whose criticisms of Islam border on the absurd. According to Da'iratul Muaarif ul Islamia quoting from Wensinek tells us that Sprenger was the first to assert that at first Ibrahim was not referred to in the Qur'an as the founder of the Ka'ba and a leader of a righteous religion but only later on was referred as such. Some time later, others developed this theme with commentary and argument. One of them wrote:

"Of all the Surahs originating in Makkah there is not one mentioning any relationship between Ibrahim and Ismail nor are they described as Muslims but only as prophets, nor is there a single verse to show that the two built the Ka'ba, or that Ibrahim was Ismail's father or an Arab prophet calling to the right religion. Surahs, Ankabut, al Zaariyaat, al Hajar, al Saafaat, al Anaam, Hoode, Maryam, Anmbiya are all Makki and prove our statement," This shows that before Muhammed⁴ no prophet appeared in Arabia, and that he was the first one in Arabia to claim prophethood.

"But when his Medina life begins, the Surahs now project Ibrahim in new light. The reason for this change is that the Prophet⁴ depended wholly on the Jews in every matter and admired their ways, and therefore, looked upon Ibrahim from their angle.

When on coming to Medina he invited the Jews to his religion, they refused his call and became hostile to him. Now he reflected and thought and his intelligence and innovative ability led him to lay the foundations of a religion quite separate from the Hebrew, which may be called Ibrahimic Hebrew. To complete this new faith. 'Ibrahim had to be presented in the Medina Surahs as guide to the right religion, prophet of Arabia, Ismail's father and builder of the Ka'ba...'"

Such opinions are projected to prove the superiority of Christianity and denounce Islam, and, to show that Ibrahim had no religious or family connection with Arabia. But should an impartial historian study the subject, he will have to conclude that all such statements are groundless and far from the truth. These critics have selected only those Makki Surahs which refer to Ibrahim only as a prophet. They deliberately ignore that Makki Surah which is named after Ibrahim and dwells on his great virtues in detail. This is deliberate intellectual dishonesty to mislead people who do not themselves take the trouble to read the Qur'an!

⁴ Vol 1 pp 27-28; Het Mekhasnsch Feest

Surah e Ibrahim is Makki, revealed long before the migration to Medina and states the following about this great prophet:

1. He is in the Hijaz, well within Arabia and is seen praying for himself and his family and for the protection of the place against idolatry and that it may be a centre of peace for all the world;

رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ ()

"My Lord! Make safe this territory, and save me and my sons from serving idols." (13.35)

رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ أَضَلَّلَنَّا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ - فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي - وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ()

"My Lord! They have led many of mankind astray. But whoso followeth me, he verily is of me. And whoso disobeyeth me Still Thou art Forgiving, Merciful" (13. 36)

2. Ibrahim submits that the Hijaz (the very heart of Arabia) is inhabited by his children, that he has had it inhabited and he himself is the builder of Bait ul Haram, the Ka'ba.

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ ()

"Our Lord! Lo! I have settled some of my posterity in an uncultivable valley near unto Thy Holy House; our Lord that they may establish proper worship, so incline some hearts of men that they may yearn toward them, and provide them with fruits in order that they may be thankful." (14:37)

3. Ibrahim is Ismail' s father and also of Ishaq, and Ismail is the forefather of all Arabs. He prays for establishment of the rituals of sala't, prayers.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ()

"Praise be to Allah Who hath given me in my old age Ismael and Issac. Lo! My lord is, indeed, the Hearer of prayer! My Lord make me to establish proper worship and some of my posterity (also); our Lord and accept the prayer. Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and believers on the day when the account is cast.
(Ibrahim 30-41)

Are these words not that of a Makki Surah? Can any one after reading these Verses dare to endorse the absurd allegations made by the orientalisists of Europe which out of their ignorance or bigotry be doubted? Are these Verses not of Makki origin? And do they contain all that the Medina Surahs have?

Similarly, Surahs al Ana'am and al Namal are also Makki, showing clearly that Ibrahim did not subscribe to *shyrk* (associating partners with the Divine Being) but was a confirmed monotheist. Therein his personality as a missionary and iconoclast has been greatly high-lighted.

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا
مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ()

"Lo! I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not of the idolaters.
(al An'aam, 80)

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيمًا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ()

"Say: As for me, my Lord has guided me unto a straight path, right religion, the community of Ibrahim the Upright, who was no idolater."
(al An'aam 162)

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ()

"Lo! Ibrahim was a nation obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters."
(al Nahal 120)

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ ()

"And afterward We inspired thee (Muhammed), saying Follow the religion of Ibrahim, as one by nature upright. He was not of the idolaters.
(al Nahal 123)

Do these Verses not further refute the orientalist critics? Whether Makki Surahs or Madni, Ibrahim's personality appears the same throughout. In both, he is a missionary of the Upright religion, father of Ismail and the Arabs, founder and builder of the Ka'ba, guide and prophet of Arabia. For the orientalists to say that Ibrahim's personality is different in the Surahs of the two periods is downright false and calumny. It is also wrong to say that no prophet appeared in Arabia before Muhammed ﷺ because, besides, Ibrahim and Ismail, Hud and Salih are prophets of this very land.

So blinded are these orientalists by their prejudices that they forget that by falsifying the Qur'an on this subject they also falsify the Bible which clearly states that Ibrahim was Ismail's father, and Ismail is the forefather of the Arabs, that Arabia was inhabited by Ibrahim's descendants.

It is also absurd to say that the Prophet ﷺ followed Hebrew guidance, but on arriving in Medina and coming to face Jewish opposition, he invented a separate religion and called it *millat e Ibrahim*. The fact is that during his life in Makkah he never came across any Jews. It was only on coming to Medina that he came face to face with them. He was more inclined to them than he was to the idolaters. He was also a guide of the religion of Musa. Although this religion had been interpolated, its people, the Jews, were opposed to idolatry and, in spite of the corruption of the holy text, there still were passages in it foretelling his advent. Besides, too, there still were in it true Divinely inspired commandments of Allah, the real basis of the law of Musa.

For these reasons the Prophet thought that the Jews would accept Islam. But when he met with nothing from them but maliciousness, and refusal, his attitude towards them could only be what it was towards the idolaters.

Are Springer and those of his way of thinkers not clear a point or do they simply not wish to understand that since Ibrahim was Israel's (Jacob's) grandfather and the Jews very proudly trace their religion to Israel, is it not ridiculous for them to say that Ibrahim was a Jew? Is it sensible to say of a grandson's religion that his grandfather, long after he had passed away, was a follower of that religion?

That is why the Qur'an states:

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا ()

"Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Christian but he was upright and one who had surrendered to Allah."

These words have been taken by these bigoted, blind critics to mean that the Prophet ﷺ followed the religion of the Jews but in Medina invented his own religion. They also quote another Verse of the Qur'an to show that before

Muhammed ﷺ no prophet appeared in Arabia:

لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ

"That thou mayest warn a folk to whom there came no warner before."

But this is a mistaken arising out of ignorance of sufficient knowledge of the Arabic language, its grammar and style and the logical sequence of the arguments drawn up to refute the arguments produced by the polytheists.

The background will have to be kept in view. At the time of the revelation of this Verse, the greater part of Arabia was submerged in idolatry and when the Prophet ﷺ called them to worship only one God, Allah,

قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهَا آبَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا

"They said: We have found our forefathers on this (idol worship) and Allah has ordered us to it."

It was now necessary to tell them that "wrong religion" was different from "right religion". The right religion can be ascertained by an intellectual approach or by recorded narratives or both. If both these approaches are closed, such a religion is false and its claimant is a liar. The Qur'an has, therefore divided its Verses into three parts: one, to refute the arguments of the polytheists and expose the falsehood of their claims. Thus to refute their assertion that Allah has commanded idolatry. Qur'an states categorically,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ أَ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ()

"Allah does not enjoin absurdities and falsehood. Or do ye ascribe to Allah that of which ye know nothing?"

(al A'raaf 28)

The second category of Verses concern the intellectual approach to arrive at the conclusion that the false relations they have set up with Allah and on which they base their vaunted faith cannot be acceptable to intelligent people.

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمُ الرَّبُّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبَنُونَ () أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنَاثًا وَهُمْ

شَاهِدُونَ () أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ مِنْ أَفْكَهِمْ لَيَقُولُونَ () وَلَدَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَإِنَّهُمْ

لَكَذِبُونَ () أَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِينَ () مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ

تَحْكُمُونَ () أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ()

"Ask them (O Prophet!) Hath thy Lord daughters whereas they have sons? Or created We the angels females, while they were present Lo! it is of their falsehood that they say. Allah hath begotten. And lo! verily, they tell a lie. (And again of their falsehood): He hath preferred daughters to sons. What aileth ye? How judge ye? Will ye not then reflect? Or have you a clear warrant? (al Sa'faat 149- 156)

The third category concerns the wrong authority they refer to in connection with their false beliefs. The Qur'an asks them whether they have a clear warrant from Allah in respect of what they say. Has a Book been sent down on them?

أَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطٰنٌ مُّبِيْنٌ () فَاتُوا بِكُتٰبِكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ()

"Then produce your writ, if you are truthful".

(al Safaat 157)

If they have neither a conclusive, sensible argument, nor any authority to rely on, how far is it justifiable to state that they already had a religion of Allah and codified law as well?

A Verse from Surah e Ahqaf also refutes their claim in the same way.

اَرَءَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اُرُوْنِيْ مَاذَا خَلَقُوْا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ اَمْ
لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ اِيتُوْنِيْ بِكِتٰبٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هٰذَا
اَوْ اَثَرٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ

"Say (unto them O Mmuhammad) : have you thought on all that you invoke beside Allah? Show me of what they have created of the earth. Or have they any portion in the earth? Bring me a Scripture before this (Scripture), or some vestige of knowledge (in support of what ye say) if ye are truthful.

(Ahqaaf 4)

In this way the Qur'an refutes the argument of the polytheists that there came to them any true prophet of the right religion. How could the Qur'an make any statement to the contrary when in a number of Surahs, such as Ibrahim, Namal, al An'aam, it clearly proves that Ibrahim and Ismail were Arab prophets. There are no contradictions in the Qur'an. It is the Word of Allah, Knower of the visible and the invisible, not of a human being subject to forgetfulness.

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ
اِخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

"Have they not reflected on the Qur'an? Had it been the word of any other than Allah they would have found many a discrepancy in it. "

Whatever Sprenger and other orientalisists like him have said is entirely baseless and downright malicious and bigoted. They are guilty of intellectual dishonesty, with the motive of misleading the world:

وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاءً.

"They (the unbelievers) desire that like them ye too beome disbelievers so that ye all may be the same. "

Muslims have always had one answer for them:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا.

"Our Lord! Incline not our hearts to unbelief after Thou has guided us"

Commentarors have also stated that such Verses refer only to those who lived during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ and have nothing to do with their forefathers and past history .

Ibrahim in the Qur'an:

The guidance projected by the Qur'an is , indeed, the message of the *millat* of Ibrahim and, therefore, he is mentioned in a number of places in its pages.

Surah	Times	Verses
Al-Baqar	2	124-127, 130-132, 133, 135, 136, 140, 258, 260
Aal e Imran	3	33, 65, 67, 68, 84, 95, 97
Al-Nisa	4	54, 125, 163
Al-An'aam	6	74, 75 83, 161
Al-Tauba	9	70, 114
Hud	11	69, 74, 75, 76
Ibrahim	14	35

Al-Nahal	16	120, 123
Al-Anmbiya	21	51, 60, 62, 69
Al Shu-ara	26	69
Al Ahzaab	33	7
Sa'ad	38	45
Al Zukhruf	43	26
Al Najam	53	37
Al Mumtahina	60	4
Yusuf	12	6, 38
Al Hajar	15	51
Maryam	19	41, 46, 58
Al Hajj	22	26, 43, 78
Al Ankabut	29	16, 31
Al Saafaat	37	83, 104, 109
Al Shura	42	13
Al Zariyaat	51	24
Al Hadeed	57	26
Al Aaa'la	87	19

Twenty-five Surahs and sixty-three Verses.

With Ibrahim are connected the names of several other prophets: Loot who is also his nephew as well as a disciple.; his sons Ismail and Isaac. Ibrahim was 87 years⁵ of age at the time of Ismail's birth and a hundred when Isaac was born⁶. His life span was a hundred-and-seventy-five years.⁷

Ibrahim's Stature:

The eminence that belongs to Ibrahim among the prophets is high-lighted in the Qur'an in several places, sometimes briefly, at others in detail, and yet

⁵ Isaiah 16 Takvin 16

⁶ Isaiah 15 Takvin 21

⁷ Isaiah 7 Takvin 25

others dwelling his great virtues. According to the Genesis, he belonged to Aur of the Chaldees. His people were polytheists and his father was a carpenter by profession who used to make wooden statues for a living.

But from the beginning, Ibrahim was blessed by the Lord and endowed with guidance and wisdom. He was convinced that statues and idols can neither hear nor see, nor answer anyone's call, nor cause harm or bring good. There was no difference between them and ordinary toys. He saw morning and evening that his father made these things, with his own hands, gave them whatever shape and faces he pleased, and then sold them. So could they possibly be gods? Or said to be equals to Allah?

As soon as he was established as prophet, he attended to this profanity.

The Qur'an:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهِ عَلِيمِينَ () إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ
 وَقَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ () قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا
 لَهَا عِبَادِينَ () قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ () قَالُوا
 أَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنْتَ مِنَ اللَّعِينِينَ () قَالَ بَلْ رَبُّكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ الَّذِي فَطَرَهُنَّ وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ ذَلِكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ()

"And We verily gave Ibrahim of old his proper course and We were aware of him. When he said unto his father and his folk: What are these which you pay devotion to? They said, We found our fathers worshippers of them. He said: Verily ye and your fathers were in plain error. They said, Bringest thou unto us the truth or art thou some jester?"

He said: Nay, but your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who created them, and I am of those who testify unto that.
 (al Annibiya 51 - 56)

As the blessings of Allah showered on Ibrahim, and he was appointed to an eminent place in the galaxy of Divine messengers, he made the mission of the upright religion the centre of his activity.

When he saw that his people were so engrossed in idolatry, worship of the stars and nature as well, that there was not even a vestige of Divine Unity in their hearts, there was nothing more astonishing for them than that Allah could be only One, he girded himself with courage to proclaim to them the religion of truth.

“What is this that I see? You make these idols with your own hands and then you worship them? And if they get spoilt in the making, you throw them away and make others to replace them and begin adoring them. Give up this stupidity, and sing praises to Allah the One and bow your heads to Him alone Who is my Creator and your Creator, Lord and Master of all the universe.”

But his people paid him no heed. Being deprived of the ability, the talent and the vision to see the truth, they ridiculed him.

Invitation to his father:

Ibrahim saw that the biggest centre of idolatry was his own house. His father Aazar's craftsmanship had made him the focus of every eye. It was, therefore, necessary that the beginning of the true faith should be made with him.

“O father!” he said, “the way you have chosen to seek Allah, which you say, is the way followed by your forefathers is the way of falsehood and straying away. The right way and guidance is that to which I call you. Unity of Allah is the fountain spring of salvation not the worship and service of the idols you make with your own hands. Renounce your way and firmly adopt the way of the One True Allah so that you may obtain His pleasure and the blessings of this life and of the Hereafter!”

But these words had no effect on his father. Instead, he began to threaten his son with stoning him to death, if the young man did not refrain from denouncing the idols. When Ibrahim saw that every limit had been crossed, and there was also, on one hand the need for courtesy to the old man and, on the other, the matter of vital principle, that of the Divine Being, he took the only course open to him. With great suaveness and civility he said. “If such be your reply then, I depart and may Peace be on you!”

“I cannot renounce Allah's religion of truth nor worship idols!” But though I go, I shall pray for you that Allah may forgive you, that you may receive His guidance and be saved from His punishment!

This is recorded in the Qur'an:

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ () إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا () إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ
يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْئًا () يَا أَبَتِ
إِنِّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ()
يَا أَبَتِ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا () يَا أَبَتِ

إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا ()
 قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ أَنْتَ عَنِ الْهَيْبَةِ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ ؕ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَه لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ
 وَأَهْجُرَنِي مَلِيًّا () قَالَ سَلِّمْ عَلَيْكَ ؕ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي
 حَفِيًّا () وَأَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُوا رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا
 أَكُونَ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي شَقِيًّا ()

“And make mention (O Muhammad) in the Scripture of Ibrahim. Lo! he was a saint, a prophet. When he said unto his father, Why worshippest thou that which heareth not nor seeth, nor can it aught avail thee. O my father! Lo! There hath come unto me of knowledge that which came not unto thee. So follow me, and I will lead thee on a right path. O my father! Serve not the Devil. Lo! the devil is a rebel unto the Beneficent. O my father! Lo! I fear lest a punishment from the Beneficent overtake thee so that thou become a comrade of the devil. He said rejectest thou my gods, O Ibrahim? If thou cease not, I shall surely stone thee. Depart from me a long while. He said, Peace be unto thee! I shall ask forgiveness of my Lord for thee. Lo! He was ever gracious unto me. I shall withdraw from you and that unto which you pray beside Allah. And I shall pray unto my Lord. It may be that in prayer unto my Lord I shall not be unblest.

(Maryam 41 - 49.)

Ibrahim's advice to his father is further recorded in these words:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ إِزْرَ اتَّخِذْ أَصْنَامًا آلِهَةً () إِنِّي أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ
 فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ()

“And when Ibrahim said unto his father, Dost thou take idols for your God? I see thee and thy people in plain error.”

(al An'aam)

Invitation to the Nation:

When there remained no hope for reconciliation between the father and the son and Aazar did not accept the message from his son, Ibrahim parted from him and extended his preaching. Now his message was not only for his father but for whole the nation. But they were not ready to leave the religion of their

يُمِيتِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ () وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ()
 رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَالْحَقِّنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ () وَاجْعَلْ لِي لِسَانَ
 صِدْقٍ فِي الْآخِرِينَ () وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنْ وَرَثَةِ الْجَنَّةِ النَّعِيمِ () وَاعْفُرْ لِأَبِي
 إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ () وَلَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ () يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ
 وَلَا بَنُونَ () إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ()

"Recite unto them the story of Ibrahim. When he said unto his father and his folk. What worship ye? They said: We worship idols and are ever devoted unto them. He said, Do they hear you when ye cry? Or do they benefit or harm you? They said, Nay but we found our fathers acting on this practice. He said, See now that which ye worship, ye and your forefathers! Lo! They are all an enemy unto me, save the Lord of the worlds, Who created me and Who doth guide me; and Who feedeth me and watereth me. And when I sicken He healeth me, and Who causeth me to die, then giveth me life (again). And Who, I ardently hope, will forgive me my sins on the Day of Judgment. My Lord! Vouchsafe me wisdom and unite me to the righteous! And give me a good report in later generations; and place me among the inheritors of the Garden of Delight. And forgive my father. LO! He is among those who err. And abase me not on the day when they are raised, the Day when wealth and sons avail not (any man), save one who bringeth unto Allah a whole heart"

(Verses 69-89)

But Aazar's heart and his people would not soften.

We have mentioned in the previous pages that Ibrahim's people used also to worship stars. They believed that life and death, the seasons, famine and abundance, victory and defeat, the universe and its system work according to the movement of the stars. This influence is intrinsic in their nature. Therefore, it is necessary to please them, and this is not possible without worshipping them.

Ibrahim, therefore, considered it necessary that just as he had tried to expose the facts about their earthly gods he should also draw their attention to the falsity of their gods in the skies. He pointed to the temporary nature of the stars and planets. These shining things, the sun and the moon and such did not possess divine powers. But the people overawed by gods made by their own hands and believing that he who spoke ill of them would be destroyed by their



The ziggurats, which were used both as temples and astronomical observatories, were constructions made with the most advanced techniques of the age. The stars, the moon and the sun were the primary objects of worship, and therefore, the sky had great importance. Left and below are the important ziggurats of Mesopotamia.



anger. could hardly be expected to think better of those up in the skies. It was not easy to create in them feelings against them. Ibrahim approached them according to their intellectual level with an unusual argument.

It was a starful night and one of the stars shone brighter than the others. Pointing to it he proclaimed, "This is my Providential Lord. If stars can provide sustenance, then, surely, this one being the brightest deserved the most adoration. But when it set at its appointed time, and could not dare show itself for a moment more than the time fixed for it for the benefit of its worshippers. Ibrahim declared, "I do not like a Allah that hides itself," implying that something which is subject to far quicker changes than he was, could not possibly be his Allah.

Then he saw the full moon shining bright in all its beauty, and he said, "This is my Sustaining Lord!" It was brighter and bigger and illumined the whole world. If stars were to be made gods, then the moon appeared to have the greater right to be Allah.

But not much later approached the morning twilight and the nearer came the dawn the dimmer got the moon and less and less bright until it vanished. Ibrahim now spoke words that would embed his objective in their minds without their being conscious of it, namely, faith in the One True Allah. He said: "If my Lord had not guided me I too should have been one of the erring folk" Not a word more because there was one more link to the chain of arguments. and the people too had a ready answer for it. It was, therefore, not proper to say more.

The starful night came to an end, the moon and the stars disappeared from sight. The sun was coming up and soon was dazzling in the skies. Ibrahim said, "This is my Allah because of all the heavenly bodies it is the biggest." But gradually the day too came to an end, the sun having brightened the world all day began to sink beyond Iraq; night began to approach and the sun too vanished from sight.

And now Ibrahim thought it was ripe time to convey the real message and render the people speechless. The shining bodies in the skies were subject to far greater changes and kept appearing and disappearing in them, why did they set and sink? Why did they discontinue to shine. Why did the moon dim the light of the stars and why did the sun take away the light of the moon "I, therefore, exculpate myself from all associating with the True One Allah (mushrik beliefs). I have turned my face towards the One True and only Creator of the heavens and the earth. I am upright (hanif) and not a

polytheist.”⁸

Now the folk understood that Ibrahim had blunted all their weapons, and defeated their arguments. They began to think of ways to counteract; how to answer his apparently incontestable argument, and finding no words began to threaten him that their gods would certainly punish him for his insolence.

Ibrahim said, “Are you trying to intimidate me and frighten me with your gods? The one true Allah has shown me the path of truth while you have nothing but stray wandering about. I care nothing for your idols. Only what my Lord wishes will take place; your idols can do nothing. Have you not been able to derive any guidance from my argument and counsel? You do not seem to be afraid of disobeying Allah and ascribing partners to Him for which you cannot advance even one reason, and you expect that a believer of Allah the One and responsible for the peace of the world should be afraid of idols. If only you could understand who is the mischievous one and who a lover of peace!”

Real peace is only for him who has faith in Allah -as- One, and abhors duality; he alone is on the right path.

Such was the argument, which, next to his mission and guidance, Allah the High endowed Ibrahim with to contest star worships and emerges victorious.

We have in Surah e al An-aam:

وَكَذَلِكَ نُرَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلِكُوتَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُوْنَ مِنَ
 الْمُتَّقِيْنَ () فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَىٰ كَوْكَبًا قَالَ هَٰذَا رَبِّيَ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ
 قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْإِفْلِيْنَ () فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِعًا قَالَ هَٰذَا رَبِّيَ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ
 قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّيْنَ () فَلَمَّا رَأَى
 الشَّمْسَ بَازِعَةً قَالَ هَٰذَا رَبِّيَ هَٰذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَقَوْمِ إِنِّي
 بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُوْنَ () إِنِّي وَجْهَتُ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ
 وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ () وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ
 أَتُحَاجُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُوْنَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَن

⁸ The Qur'an does not mention if this dialogue took place on one single night. If this is so, the night must have been one when the moon rises late and then set.

يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ () وَكَيْفَ
 أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ
 عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَإِنَّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ () الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ()
 وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَشَاءُ إِنَّ
 رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

"Then did We show Ibrahim the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty. When the night grew dark upon him he beheld a star. He said, This is my Lord, but when it set, he said, I love not things that set. And when he saw the moon uprising, he reclaimed, This is my Lord, but when it set, he said, Unless my Lord guide me, I surely shall become one of the folk who are astray. And when he saw the sun uprising, he cried, This is my Lord. This greater! And when it set, he exclaimed, O my people! I am free from all that you associate (with Him). Lo! I have turned my face towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not one of the idolaters. His people argued with him. He said dispute ye with me concerning Allah when He hath guided me? I fear not at all that which ye set beside Him unless my Lord willeth. My Lord includeth all beings in His knowledge; will ye not then remember? How should I fear that which you set up beside Him when ye fear not to set beside Allah that for which He hath revealed unto you no warrant? Which of the two factions hath more right to safety? (Answer me that) if ye have knowledge. Those who believe and obscure not their belief by wrong doing, theirs is safety and they are rightly guided. That is Our argument. We gave it unto Ibrahim against his folk. We raise unto degrees of wisdom whom We will. Lo! Thy Lord is Wise, Aware!

(V 76-84)

Although the ulema unanimously agree that Ibrahim never in his life worshipped stars, his life was always free of polytheism, they have certain differences in their commentaries on these words. What has been stated here is one of the views, namely, that Ibrahim's dialogue was for the purpose of

dumbfounding his people. Presenting an argument is one of the ways of convincing a party holding discreet opinions, theories alone are not always convincing enough. Visible proof is more effective in silencing the opponent, who may, then, admit the truth, provided he has the capacity for it. The truth, then, comes to the surface, clearly visible. Otherwise he comes down to wrangling.

Ibrahim was a great prophet. Therefore, his mission was not based on low arguments but on presenting natural proof, and this is his distinguishing status. It was his adopted style of preaching. Stars and planets are not fit to be lords of providence. Providence is He alone Who is sustaining Lord of the entire universe, He alone is the Creator and Owner of it. Although the people began wrangling, their conscience knew that whatever Ibrahim had said was the truth and they had no counter argument. This was Ibrahim's purpose, the limit of his missionary way, for, it was beyond his power physically to force the truth into their hearts.

After this commentary the Qur'anic Verses require further interpretation. The context of the verses relevant to the heavenly bodies fully confirms this. For example:

إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ أَزْرَأْتَنِي إِتَّخِذُ أَصْنَامًا إِلَهَةً إِنِّي أَرَاكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ () وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ ()

“(Remember) when Ibrahim said unto his father Aazar, Takest thou idols for god? Lo! I see thee and thy folk in error manifest. Thus did We show Ibrahim the Kingdoms of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty.” (V. 75, 76)

From these words we derive the following conclusion;

1. The argument took place when Ibrahim was engaged in his missionary work addressing his father and the people. Beginning the second Verse with the words *fa-ka-zaalika* is to imply this meaning is; and the third Verse with *fa* shows, that it is connected with the second Verse, the three, then, being interconnected.
2. Just as Allah had furnished Ibrahim with convincing arguments against idol-worship so as to silence the people and show them the path of truth, so He also showed him the kingdom of the heavens and the earth so that in this connection also he may, by the best of arguments, show them the right path and silence their dispute.

In the Verse pertaining to the setting of the sun are the words:

قَالَ يَقَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيٌّ مِّمَّا تَشْرِكُونَ

"(Ibrahim) said, I am not one of the mushrikeen (of those who associate partners with Allah)

And together is the counsel:

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ()

"I have turned my face toward Him who created the heavens and the earth and I am by nature upright (hanif) and am not one of the idolaters."

And in the next Verse we have:

وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحَاجُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ.

"And his people argued with him. He said 'Do ye dispute with me concerning Allah?'"

And in the 1st Verse we have:

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ نَّشَاءٍ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ()

"That is Our argument. We gave it unto Ibrahim against his folk. We raise unto degrees of wisdom whom We will. Verily thy Lord is Wise, the Aware!."

We derive the conclusion:- that the subject of the heavenly bodies, sun and moon and stars, was very relevant to the people of the time. This is the reason Ibrahim addressed the people instead of himself. So the people began to quarrel with him.

Allah describes the argument as His endowment on Ibrahim and that Ibrahim's status is very high. The people stand in great need of his guidance.

Allah has also said about Ibrahim:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهِ عَلِيمِينَ ()

"And We verily gave Ibrahim of old his proper course, and We were aware of him." (Al Anbiya R5 Vere 51)

This could not be an event of the time of Ibrahim's adolescence nor the words of his own thinking.

It was, indeed, a formidable argument from Ibrahim's side against the idolaters, that it was a great error to worship stars, build temples for them, and name them after the names of their gods. All heavenly bodies were bound together in one system, subject to changes with the changes in night and day. The Lord and Creator of this system is only He in Whose hand is the power to make them serve.

لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ (١)

"It is neither for the sun to over power the moon, nor for the night to overtake the day."

When the people still refused to accept Islam and clung to idol worship, Ibrahim openly declared war, saying "I will now pursue a stratagem with your idols that will nonplus you."

وَتَاللَّهِ لَأَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَامَكُمْ بَعْدَ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا مُدْبِرِينَ (٢)

"And by Allah! I shall circumvent your idols after you have gone away and turned your backs." (Anbiya R. 5 Verse 57)

A festival was due in a few days at which people made offerings of various kinds of food and drinks to their idols then held a fair to make merry, and enjoy themselves in the usual pagan ways. When the day came they set out from their homes and some of them asked Ibrahim to go along with them but he refused on the excuse of being indisposed. They thought that he was under the curse of some of their gods, perhaps, a star, or stars, and they left him.

فَنظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ (٣) فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ (٤) فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ (٥)

"And he glanced a glance at the stars, then said. Lo! I feel sick. And they turned their backs and went away from him."

(al-Safat R 29 Verses 88,89)

When they were away at the fair, their king and their chiefs, he went into their main temple and, seeing the fruit and other luxurious foods, addressed them, saying, "Why don't you eat these superb things?" And getting no answer, asked why they did not reply. He, then, set about to breaking them one by one, leaving the biggest of them untouched and placing a hatchet on its shoulder.

فَرَاغَ إِلَى إِلِهِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ (٦) مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْطِقُونَ (٧)

*"Then turned he to their gods and said, Will ye not eat?
What aileth you that ye speak not? (al Safat R 3 Verse 91)*

When the people returned from the fair, and went into the temple they were surprised and enraged to see its condition. Among them were some who recognized Ibrahim as the man who had spoken the words

تَاللّٰهِ لَآ كَيْدَنَّ اَصْنَامَكُمْ

And they said that this must be his work. "It is he who is the enemy of our gods."

قَالُوا مَنْ فَعَلَ هٰذَا بِالِهَتِنَا اِنَّهُ لِمِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ () قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا قَتِي
يَذْكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ ()

"They said, who hath done this to our gods? Surely it must be some evil-doer. They said, "We heard a youth make mention of them who is called Ibrahim."

(al Anbiya R 5. Verses 58,59.)

When the chiefs and priests heard this they were furious, saying that he should be caught and brought before the crowd so that everyone might see this criminal. When he was brought before them they asked him why he had done this to their gods.

قَالُوا فَاَتُوا بِهٖ عَلٰى اَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُوْنَ قَالُوا اَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ
هٰذَا بِالِهَتِنَا يَا اِبْرٰهِيْمُ ()

They said, "Is it thou who hast done this to our gods?"!

Ibrahim recognized his moment of opportunity. The masses were seeing the deplorable condition of their gods. It was time to humble their priests about their utterly false beliefs. He said, "Ask your big Allah, surely he should know. It seems to me to be his handiwork!" He thought that these words would expose the fraud and hypocrisy of their priests since idols can neither hear nor speak. The way to preach his mission would now be clear, he surmised. How ashamed the priests and idol worshippers would now be!

قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيْرُهُمْ هٰذَا فَاَسْأَلُوْهُمْ اِنْ كَانُوْا يَنْطِقُوْنَ ()

"He said, But this their chief hath done it. So question them, if they can speak."
(al Anbiya R 5)

What could possibly be the response of the priests? They were too ashamed to say a word, lost in thought as to how to answer. They too understood; they saw with their own eyes a spectacle they had never dreamt of seeing. Everyone, big and small, had to acknowledge in his heart that it was not Ibrahim but they who had all along been in the wrong! With heads bowed, they confessed "Ibrahim, you know very well that images made of stone or wood do not speak."

فَرَجَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ () ثُمَّ نَكِسُوا عَلَىٰ
رُءُوسِهِمْ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا هَؤُلَاءِ يَنْطِقُونَ ()

"Then gathered they apart and said: Lo! You yourselves are the wrong-doers. And they were utterly confounded, and they said, Well thou knowest that they speak not."

(AL ANBIYA r 5 Verse 61)

This is how Ibrahim's disputation with idolaters came to an end. And now Ibrahim gave them a brief admonition. "Surely, you should understand that they who can neither hear nor speak must be unable to profit or injure, and, therefore, how can they be gods?"

اَتَّعِبُدُونَ مِمَّن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَآ يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ () أَفَ لَكُمْ
وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ()

"He said, Worship ye, then, instead of Allah that which cannot profit you at all, nor harm you? Fie on you and all that you worship beside Allah? Have ye then no sense?"

(Vere 67 al Safat R 3)

فَاقْبَلُوا إِلَيْهِ يَزِفُونَ () قَالَ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْحِتُونَ () وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ
وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ()

"And (his people) came towards him hastening. He said, Worship ye that which ye yourselves do carve when it is Allah who hath created you and what ye make."

(Verses 92-96)

The effect of Ibrahim's counsel and success should now have been that the whole nation repented, renounced its false beliefs and crooked ways and took the straight path; instead, the crookedness of their hearts, rebellious nature of their souls, stubbornness and arrogance of the mind did not permit them to retract. And every single one of them declared his hostility to Ibrahim. They said to one another that Ibrahim must be punished for his insolence and criminal deed: he should be burnt alive so that his straight-path mission must be put to an end once for all.

Invitation to the King:

The incident reached the metropolis from where Namrud, who was then king, ruled Iraq. Kings too in those days claimed divinity and they looked upon them as their lord-gods, the same as their other gods, worshipping them in the same manner but with greater reverence because they possessed intelligence and also crown and throne.

When Mamrud heard of it all, he thought that if Ibrahim's mission continued, he might succeed in stirring up the people against him, and, together with the religion of their forefathers, the monarchy too would go into decline. It was, therefore, wise to put an end to the whole movement at the very beginning.

He ordered Ibrahim to be brought before him. When Ibrahim arrived, Mamrud began the conversation by asking him:

"Why do you contradict the religion of your fathers and why do you refuse to look upon me as your Allah?" Ibrahim replied:

"I worship the One True Allah, the One and Only. I associate none as partner with Him; the whole universe is His creation. You too are a human being, just as we all are human beings. Thus how can you be Allah and lord? And how can these idols, made of wood, deaf and dumb be gods? I am on the right path and all of you are on the wrong path. How, then, can I give up my mission? And how can I accept the faith of your fathers and forefathers?"

Mamrud asked, "If you have any Allah besides me, state some attribute of his which I do not possess."

Ibrahim said: "My Lord is He Who gives life and Who gives death".

Mamrud said: "I too have so much power" and he ordered the executioner to behead an innocent man. The order was carried out immediately. Then Mamrud ordered that a prisoner under sentence of death be set free. This too was done. The foolish king said to Ibrahim: "You have seen that I have the power to give death or life, as I please; where then is any special distinction of your Allah?"

Ibrahim saw that Mamrud was ignorant of the real meaning of 'giving life and death', or that he wished his subjects to remain ignorant of the difference. This is not what is implied by giving life, that is, being, nor is hanging or beheading, death or non-being. The Lord of death is He Who takes away a soul from the body and moves it to the possession of his own hands. Many a one beheaded or killed by the sword lives and many a one saved from being killed or executed comes to death and no power can save them. If this were otherwise, Mamrud would not have been king, and his first ancestor-monarch would still have been ruling. No one knows how many were buried under ground in this kingdom of Iraq, and how many yet had to go the same way!

Ibrahim did not think it wise to continue the discussion on the subject of life and death, because thereby the masses would only fall into confusion and discussion and debate was not his purpose. His sole purpose was to impress into the hearts the glory of the One Allah and faith in Him. He changed his line to one, which the people saw with their eyes everyday. He said, "I believe in that Allah Who causes the sun to come out of the east and set in the west, So, if you are Allah cause the sun to rise in the west and set in the east!"

Mamrud was stupefied. He could no longer remain in doubt. This was because the sum total of Ibrahim's argument was that he believed that Allah is He who as created the entire working of the universe and his Allah so controlled it by the laws of His wisdom that nothing could move even the slightest from its appointed time or place. Reflect on the sun, how many benefits the earth and the rest of the solar system derive from it; even so Allah has fixed the timings of its rising and setting. The sun has no power of its own to move away from such timing. That is because it is controlled by Allah's hand. Allah can do whatever He wishes to do, but He does only what His wisdom determines.

Mamrud could have given only three answers. Either that he had full control over the sun or he himself created the entire universal system. But he did not say so because he himself did not believe it.

Or he could say that he did not acknowledge that the universe was any one's creation and the sun itself was permanent Allah. If he said so, the people would be reminded of Ibrahim's first argument, namely, that if the sun was Allah, worthy of worship why was it subject to death and more changes than its worshippers? Was it within its power to rise or set whenever it pleased?

Or he could have accepted Ibrahim's challenge and brought the sun out from the west. But because it was not in his power to the recourse to any of these

three ways what else could he do but get stupefied.¹⁰

This is given briefly in the Qur'an:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ
إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أَحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ
الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَآيْهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

"(Bethink thee of him who had an argument with Ibrahim about his Lord because Allah had given him the kingdom. how, when Ibrahim said, My Lord is He Who giveth life and causeth death, he answered, I give life and cause death. Ibrahim said, Lo! Allah causeth the sun to rise in the East, so do thou cause it to rise in the West. Thus was the disbeliever abashed. And Allah guideth not wrong-doing folk.)"
(Surah e Baqar R35)

In brief, Ibrahim began his mission first with his father, inviting him to Islam, proclaimed the message of truth and showed him the path; next he extended the invitation to the people, and presented his arguments based on natural principles and reasoned to make them accept the truth, presenting them with tenderness, sweetness of tone but firmness and clarity of logic.

Finally, he came face to face with the king and made it clear to him that Divinity and Lordship belongs to the One True Allah. All the earth and whatsoever in it is His creation and bound by His endowed law of being and non-being.

¹⁰ Christian scholars and Arya Samajists blindly following them have raised the objection that if Namrud had retorted that Ibrahim! ask your God to cause the sun to rise from the west, what possible answer could he would have given. The objection is superficial. Had Mamrud challenged Ibrahim in these words, he would be admitting that he himself was not god and also that the sun was not their god. Nor did he have the power to accept Ibrahim's challenge. Mamrud, therefore, preferred silence.

Besides, Ibrahim believed that Allah would not put His prophet to shame and, in such a situation, He would cause the sun to come up from the west. Such an event would have been surprising, but not for those who believe that the heavenly bodies are bound in a definite system, not because of any intrinsic power of their own but by the Power of some other Being exalted above all things, and the intrinsic qualities are of His creation, therefore, if He wishes, He can alter their qualities or destroy them utterly. This Absolute Lord is Allah.

At this stage the verbal discussion had forever been concluded. In its place there was now to be physical force from the side of Polytheists. The people and their ruler were his sworn enemies; there was talk of opposition on all sides and slogans of enmity; with hatred and contempt, intentions of a dreadful punishment and revenge. Who was there to help him and how was any support to be made available?

Ibrahim neither cared nor was he afraid. As before, he continued with his mission, his invitation to the path of truth. But at such a time too when he had no material support he did have one support, a 'tremendous support'. Known as the support of supports, Helper of all help Allah the One. He did not leave the great prophet and guide of the people forsaken, he turned into dust every plan of the enemies. A huge furnaces was set up in which fire was kept blazing for several days and nights and the heat generated was seen to burn nearby things, the king and his subjects convinced that there was not a chance of Ibrahim escaping from it, they seated him in a gophan? And threw him into the blazing flames. That very instant, the All-Powerful Extinguisher of the elof fire commanded the fire to turn cold and safety and peace for Ibrahim! And the fire was cold and peace!

And Ibrahim came out of the extinguished furnace safe and unscared.

A religious person will believe all this as true because he has learnt by his intelligence and intuition that the knowledge coming from the Qur'an is knowledge from Divine inspiration and the prophet-medium that knowledge comes is altogether prophet's innocence. The knowledge of miracles he conveys to us may be astonishing to our intelligence but not impossible to understand. The integrity of the messenger has been tested from all angles. News of this kind is, without doubt correct and, as Herades said, the man who does not lie to people, never deceives, can never attribute to Allah any false words, never dare lie about Allah. And it, is the straight path that some things spoken by a religion that has been tested on the anvil of intelligence and found satisfactory may seem astonishing but not impossible, have faith in it without philosophic hair-splitting. The message conveyed by the Prophet^s looked upon as brighter than the sun have the faith that the All powerful Being Who possesses the power to create qualities in things also possesses the power to take away from it, whenever He pleases, any of those qualities. But although this path may not be found satisfactory by some philosophers, who may not let this method of religious inquiry to remain free of hair-splitting, for them, too, this miracle cannot be impossible, because it is an admitted fact that fire burns, but there are materials known as fire-proof which cannot be consumed by fire.

It might be said that fire retains its burning quality, it is the material that is chemically altered so that fire does not affect it. To this a religious minded man can retort that Mamrud's fire retained its consuming quality properly but it proved ineffective on Ibrahim. The only difference is that human hands treat fireproof material. And any human being may learn the scientific technology of it while flesh remaining unaffected was directly the work of Allah. Such work of Allah is proof of His prophet's truthfulness and sometimes for good reason becomes visible to show the prophet's superiority above his enemies. In Shariah this is known as a miracle. It is neither a craft nor the product of available material. If Allah's created humans have the power to render the natural properties of a material ineffective, why, on some special occasion, may Allah the Creator not show His power to prevent the properties of a material from having effect?

If today, science has discovered that there are gases present in the atmosphere which can prevent fire from scalding the skin, who can prevent Allah the Creator of gases from keeping a fire away from reaching anyone converting it into safety and peace?

The Qur'an:

قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَعِلِينَ (قُلْنَا يَنَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ) (وَآرَدُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْآخْسَرِينَ)

"They said, 'Burn him and stand up for your gods, if you will do so.' We said, 'O fire, be you a coolness and a safety for Ibrahim.' And they desired to continue against him, but we made them the worst losers. (al Anbiya R 5)

قَالُوا ابْنُوا لَهُ بُيُوتًا فَأَلْقُوهُ فِي الْجَحِيمِ (فَارَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ) وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ

"They said, 'Build up for him a building, then fling him into the blazing flame'. And they designed a trap for him, but we made them the lowest. And he said, 'I am going to my Lord; surely He will guide me.' (al Safat 37, V. 97-99)

Bukhari: According to the Qur'an when a dialogue was going on between Ibrahim and some polytheists who asked him to go with them to the fair, he excused himself by saying, "I am indisposed". And when he was questioned about the breaking of the images he said,

قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا فَسْأَلُوهُمْ إِنْ كَانُوا يَنْطِقُونَ ()

"But "The biggest of them has done it. So ask him, if he can speak."

These two sentences are not lies. What Ibrahim's indisposition was could only be best known to him. Even if one appears to be all right, it is possible that he really might not be all that well.

The other words, too, should not be taken for a lie. Any man of ordinary acquaintance with words and idioms knows that when two people holding different opinions argue on a subject, the best way for one to silence the other is to admit one of his admissible thoughts and use it in such a way that in conclusion the end may prove in favour of himself and opposed to the other.

This is exactly what Ibrahim had done. The people's belief was that their gods heard everything and fulfilled the hopes of their worshippers. They were happy with those who adored them and avenged the lives terribly on those who were their opponents and enemies. Ibrahim broke all the idols except the biggest of them. When the time of questioning came, he adopted the same method that has been described. The result was that the people and their priests had to admit that they were in the wrong and Ibrahim in the right, so correct that they were rendered tongue-tied!

Thus there is nothing in the words which may be taken as a lie in any sense whatever. Besides these words referred to in the Qur'an, Bukhari, Muslim and some other Tradition books mention a third quote, beginning with the words:

لم يكذب ابراهيم نبي عليه السلام قط الا ثلث كذبات ()

"Never spoke Ibrahim a lie but three times"

(Bukhari vol. 6)

We have already mentioned two occasions. The third was on his arrival in Egypt. While he was on the way with his wife Sarah he told her that the king there was a tyrannical ruler who had every good-looking married woman abducted and her husband assassinated but the unmarried ones he left unmolested. Now, there would be no Muslims there except her and himself. Therefore tell him that I was your brother.

She did accordingly. But at night when Namrud extended his evil hands towards her it turned numb and immovable and he could not touch her. He

¹¹ Bukhari vol 6 p.301

begged her to pray her Allah that He cure him so that she may be set free. She prayed and his hand was cured but he went back on his word and his hand again turned paralyzed: he begged her again and the same thing happened a third time. He thought that Ibrahim was a jinn and he told her to go away at once. He also gave her Hajira to take with her.

She brought Hajira to Ibrahim and told him all that had taken place, and thanked Allah for having saved her from the clutches of such a tyrant and also having given her a maiden. Abu Hurayra on hearing this Tradition, aloud said, "O Arabs, of noble descent, this is your mother!"

This Tradition is recorded in several ways in the Books. In Bukhari there is another rather lengthy Tradition by the title of Hadith e Shafa-at, and in several chapters, for instance, in that of the commentary on Surah e Baqar in Kitab ul Astarqaq and Kitab ul Tauhid. Summing them up we have On Judgment Day when the resurrected one after having solicited Noah and the other prophets to intercede with Allah for them ask Ibrahim to do so, he will reply. "I feel ashamed because during his life on earth he had spoken three lies: 'I am indisposed; 'the biggest of them has done it' and I told my wife that I was her brother."

Besides Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmed, Ibn Khuzaimah, Haakim, Tibrani, Ibn e Abi Shaiba, Tirmizi and Abi Uwana also record the same Tradion as narrated by a number of Companions in different words. In some only summarily that every prophet will excuse himself from interceding; and in some only Ibrahim's words, 'I lied three times' are recorded in some, the details of the three occasions are given, in some of which the commentary is given:

ما منها كذبة ما حل بها عن دين الله ()

"The Prophet ﷺ said, 'every single one of the three lies was spoken to confirm and support Allah's religion'".

Evidently the Prophet ﷺ has not used the word *kazb* in the usual sense, sense of a lie, which is a great sin, being for personal benefit or some mundane strategy, but for thwarting the opponents of truth and purely for vindicating Allah's religion. The Qur'an confirms this.

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا ()

"Ibrahim is mentioned in Scriptures. Verily he was a truthful Prophet." (Maryam)

The word siddique is the superlative degree describing one whose very nature is truthful.

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا ۖ وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ (١)
شَاكِرًا لِّأَنْعَامِهِ ۖ اجْتَبَاهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (٢)

"Surely Ibrahim was a leader obedient to God, a Hanif, and he was not among the polytheists; grateful for his blessings. He chose him and guided him to a straight path."

(al Nahal, 6 V. 120-121)

Mujtaba and Mahdi are qualities with which kizb does not go, neither factually

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا (٣)

"Then we revealed to you, 'follow the faith of Ibrahim, The Hanif': he was not amongst the Polytheists."

(al Nahal, 16 V. 123)

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهِ عَلِيمِينَ (٤)

"And We gave Ibrahim his rectitude before (Prophethood); and of him We were Cognizant." (al Anmbiya, 21 V., 51)

These and several other Verses mention Ibrahim in the letter and tone that no doubt the word kizb cannot possibly be even imagined for him.

It must be repeated that the subject under consideration is not whether Ibrahim really did speak a lie — the Qur'an categorically denies this. Its words and spirit hold him to be a nabi and messenger, and prove his distinguishing attributes as "truthful" mujtaba, mahdi, nabi, hanif, rasool. It is also clear that words he spoke were for projecting religion, not for personal or worldly interest.

The real point is to inquire why the Prophets use word kizb for Ibrahim's words when his personality is the cause for removing doubt and suspicion in Islamic beliefs, not for creating them, specially when the words spoken on the three occasions are not kizb in any sense of it.

Sarah was Ibrahim's sister in the faith and marital relationship does not dissolve the religion-based relationship. Besides, she was also his cousin being his uncle Haran's daughter as the historians have stated. Also Ibrahim was indisposed, though not very seriously ill. And as for the words, *bal fa-ala kabiru hum* was to render the enemy tongue-tied, is not a lie among the learned circles. Why then did the Traditions interpret the subject differently?

The ulema hold two opinions. It should be said with courage that though these Traditions are from Sahi-een and are famous, the narrator of them has been mistaken and, therefore, should be unacceptable because it is much better to hold a narrator as mistaken than to attribute lies to a prophet. Imam Razi agrees with this view.

The other opinion is that to ascribe lies to a prophet is not right and proper. If there is in a sahih Tradition which is famous and has several narrators, anything that may in the least be suspected as derogatory to the dignity of a prophet, the Tradition, while being taken as correct its special wording, should be so interpreted that the Tradition may remain acceptable and unaffected. Since these Traditions have become famous and proved correct they cannot be suspected of error nor considered obsolete. Rather the words "three lies" should be interpreted to mean that they are "words spoken for a sanctified purpose yet, the addressee should not take them to mean what the speaker means but what he the addressee, himself understands them to mean according to his own mental objective." This meaning is not carved out specially for Ibrahim but is commonly used by the intellectuals. Thus rejection of the Tradition will not be incumbent and truthfulness of the prophet will also remain unaffected. The words of Hadith e Shafaat

مامنها كذبة الاماحل به عن دين الله

confirm our interpretation. The majority of ulema also accept it. They reject the other commentary and Imam Razi's opinion.

The well-known Egyptian scholar Abdul Wahab Najjar in his Qasas ul Anbiya agrees with Imam Razi, rejecting the majority of contemporary Egyptian scholars, and he plainly states, that rejects this incident of Ibrahim and Sarah.

But the right and simple way is to steer from both these versions and neither make aspersions on the prophet nor encourage agnostics and ridiculers of the Traditions.

The detail of these brief points is that the "innocence of the prophets" is the principle of religion and an important part of beliefs. Rather the foundations of religion are based on this one principle. A prophet may on some occasions, assume one form or other of 'kazb' but it will always be out of innocence, otherwise it will be impossible to distinguish which of his teachings is for his personal interest and which for pure religion.

Therefore, this principle of the Qur'an is unshakable and unalterable. He who becomes the cause for fault finding with it is himself fit for rejection and answerable for his interpretation. Thus there is no need for this principle to be

modified. The object submitted for examination will either have to be adapted to it or erased.

Similarly, the commentary and explanation of the Qur'an does not require only an Arabic lexicon but also familiarity with the words, deeds and behaviour of the Prophet ﷺ because they are a commentary explication and elucidation of the 'Word of Allah'

Qur'anic commands such as

أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ آتُوا الزَّكَاةَ أَتَمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمْ
الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ

Establish sala't (prayers,) give zaka't, perform Hajj and umara, Annual and optional, pilgrimages, fasting for him during the month of Ramadan cannot be fully understood in terms of the language only. To put these commands into action, the words and explanation by the Prophet ﷺ himself and the example shown by him are indispensable.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ
وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ

Verily there is an excellent example in the Prophet for those among you who hope in Allah and the Last Day.

The *uswa e husna*, "excellent example" is not the Qur'an or its Verse, rather, it is the Prophet's words, deeds and practice that comprise such "example".

Now when the "excellent example" is the Prophet, the last in the lineage of prophets ﷺ, it is also necessary that this "example" should be looked after for all eternity. If anything or anybody comes up to distort this example, there must be some people to prevent the distortion. This is an art known as the art, rather the science of keeping the Traditions in their original purity. The service rendered has earned the approbation even of non-Muslims.

Fourteen centuries have passed since the time of the holy Prophet ﷺ. During this period, the Traditions-science comprises more or less little fourteen branches. It is, therefore, necessary that we should not base our argument on a Tradition or some words of it, that tend to create doubt in connection with a recognized belief because of some mistake or apparent interpretation, which is rejected by a sahih, widely accepted and well-known Tradition, and making this an excuse, make the Qur'an into a strange Book to interpret which there is no work or deed of a Prophet and which has been revealed as though in a wilderness, and which can be understood only by means of the dictionary. It

should also not be forgotten that the language of all Traditions is not word for word a prophet's language. Some Traditions have been recorded according to their implication and, therefore, are the narrator's own commentary with due regard to retention of meaning.

Keeping these points in view, the problem under consideration can be solved in this way. Bukhari is looked upon as acceptable in all respects, a book ranking next only after the Qur'an, yet it is possible that being narrated according to meaning there might be a flaw in the verbal interpretation of a narration. The riwayat may be acceptable as a whole but not definite part of it. This defective part should not be rejected but simply exposed. The best example of such Traditions is that pertaining to Mayraj.

Traditionalists are agreed that Bukhari's Tradition from Abdullah b. Abi Namra, as compared with Muslim's Tradition of Asra from Anasؓ, has a flaw. There are mistakes in the order while Muslim's version is clear and without mistakes, although both are correct and worthy of acceptance.

Accordingly, both these lengthy traditions pertaining to Ibrahim belong to the category of those recorded according to their meaning and implication. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that words and arrangement of the phrases are verbatim the same that were actually spoken by the Prophetﷺ. They express only his meaning. It is possible that in spite of the correctness of the incidents narrated, the wording of some narrator might have erred.

Ibrahim's Solicitude and Guidance for the People:

How greatly Ibrahim was anxious that his people may come to the straight path of truth. It will have been appreciated that Ibrahim left no stone unturned in the effort. He first tried to make his father understand, then the masses and finally, the king, announcing everywhere that worshipping anything besides Allah was ruinous. Shyrk should, therefore, be given up. None but millat e hanifa was the straight and firm path because it was founded on the Unity of Allah.

But the unfortunate people listened to nothing, rejected the guidance. None except his cousin brother Loot and his wife Sarah. The refusers even went to the extent of burning him to death. And when Allah saved him and put his enemies to shame and Ibrahim decided to migrate to another country to convey his mission of truth. He left Faddan Aaraam¹² then a famous city of Babylon where he was born, but now destroyed.

¹² One of the greater cities of Babylon, birthplace of Ibrahim.

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ()

"And (Ibrahim) said, "I am headed towards my Lord; He will surely guide me."

That is, 'I should go away to some place where people are inclined to hear the call of Allah. The earth is not narrow. My work is to convey the message. Allah Himself will provide the media for his religion's propagation.'

Leaving his father and people, Ibrahim went away to a small township on the west of the Euphrates, known as Caldaenean. He lived here for some time, Sarah, his wife, and Loot being with him. Then he left for Haran and preached his mission here. During all this period, because he was tender hearted and full of compassion, he frequently prayed Allah for his father's guidance. At the time of bidding farewell to his father, he had promised to do this for him, deploring his rejection of the true religion and in spite of all the hatred and animosity. Allah had by direct inspiration, informed Ibrahim that Aazar would not accept the true message; that he was one of those who had destroyed their goodness and made their own selves the objective of their will.

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ ()

"Allah hath sealed up their hearts and on their eyes and their ears is a veil." (Baqar)

When Abraham was thus informed, he announced this in abhorrence of his father. And that the hope he had reposed in him was now dead, salvation no longer now being possible.

وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ مَوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَّهَا أَيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا

تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّ أَمِنَهُ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ ()

"Ibrahim's asking forgiveness for his father was only after a promise he made to him. But when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of God, he disowned him. Truly Ibrahim was suspicious, forbearing." (Tauba, 9, V. 114)

Ibrahim's Migration:

Conducting his mission, Ibrahim arrived in Palestine, with Sarah, Loot and Loot's wife.

فَأَمَّنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ()

"But Loot believed him and said, 'I will be take myself to my Lord. Truly He is the Mighty, the Wise.'" (Ankabut V. 26)

It is mentioned in the Traditions that when Usman migrated to Abyssinia with his wife Ruqayya, the Prophet ﷺ said:

ان عثمان اول مهاجر باهله بعد لوط ()

"After Loot, Usman is the first muhajir- who emigrated with his wife"

Ibrahim settled down in the west of Palestine which was at that time under the Cantinas, and later went to nearby Shikam (Nablus), where too he lived but for a short time and kept moving farther and farther west until arriving in Egypt. Now that incident took place which, according to Bukhari and Muslim, we have mentioned in the preceding pages. The words of the Genesis are:

"So when Ibrahim Egypt, the people saw that the woman was very beautiful. The peers of Pharaoh also saw her and praised her before him and they took both of them to his palace. And for her sake Pharaoh presented many gifts to Ibrahim such as goats, cows, oxen, asses, camels, slaves and maids. Then on coming to know that she was the wife of Ibrahim, he called Ibrahim and asked, "How dare you did this to me? Why did you not tell that she is your wife? Why did you tell that she was your sister? When I decided to make her my wife his fact was disclosed. Here is your wife. Take her and leave." Then Pharaoh ordered his people to let them go. Thus they let them depart with their belongings.

(Gen. Ch.12. Verses 14-20)¹³

The only difference between this account and that given by the Traditions (Bukhari and Muslim) is that the Pharaoh looked on his affliction (following his attempt to outrage Sarah) as the work of evil spirits, presented Hajira to her and permitted Ibrahim to leave the country with his companions and all that had been given him in Egypt.

Fath ul Bari records that the Egyptians believed in Jinns, By the word 'devil', Jinn is implied here.

The Genesis version is that the Pharaoh looked upon Sarah's incident as a blessing, and was angry with Ibrahim for not telling him in the very angry tone that Sarah was his wife and not his sister. And sent him off with great respect and many presents. According to the Genesis, Sarah was seventy years old at that time.

¹³ Genesis Ch. 12 V., 14-20

Both the versions are identical in their implication and the difference is negligible. It is confirmed that Ibrahim arrived in Egypt with his wife and nephew Loot; that at this time Egypt being ruled by a family who were related to the Sam and thus were blood relations of Ibrahim. It is certain that between Ibrahim and the Pharaoh something did take place which impressed the latter that Ibrahim and Ibrahim's family were Allah's favoured people and, therefore, he treated them very honorably, showered many gifts on them, even to the extent of presenting his daughter Hajira in marriage to Ibrahim to consolidate the relationship with the august family. By the custom prevailing at that time, Hajira was to serve the first wife. It is stated in Safar e Asia, a Jewish history that in Ibrahim's time the ruler of Egypt was his compatriot.¹⁴

Thus it is clear from the authentic traditions of Jews that Hajira was the daughter of Pharaoh, the King of Egypt and was not a maid. Isaac, an authentic interpreter of Genesis writes in his interpretation of Chapter 16 V.1, "When Pharaoh saw the miracles on account of Sarah, he said, "It is better for my daughter to live as a maid in Sarah's house rather than to lead a queen's life in another house."¹⁵

It is evident from the verses of Genesis that Hajira was called maid only because the Egyptian King had called her so while presenting her in the service of Ibrahim and Sarah saying that she (Hajira) would serve Sarah. This does not mean that she was in fact a maid¹⁶ but as Isaac says, she was the daughter of Pharaoh.

A tradition in Bukhari confirms this fact.¹⁷

وَأَخَذَ مَهَا هَاجِرَةَ

"And Hajira was given to Sarah to serve her."

Therefore, the acquisition by Bani Israel is wrong that Bani Ismael are inferior to them because they are descendants of a maid and Bani Israel are the descendants of Sarah; and is contradictory to the facts and history. This incident has been distorted in Genesis as is done in different chapters of it. All the details have been omitted and the word "maid" alone has been retained.

¹⁴ Arad ul Qur'an Vol2. p. 41

¹⁵ Arad ul Qur'an Vol.2 p.41

¹⁶ Barahin Bahara Fi Huriyyat e Hajira by Maulana Ghulam Rasool Chiryakoti.

¹⁷ Bukhari Bab ul Anbiya Vol. 6 p.301

“Hajira” is in fact a Hebrew word “Hagar” meaning a strange person. As Egypt was her native homeland, therefore, she was named as such. But in the same perspective of the principle it is expedient that the meanings of “Hagar” are “departed person” and the meaning homeland Egypt to become the wife of Ibrahim and maid of Sarah.

Ibrahim and Two Important Occasions

A special pray by Ibrahim is referred to in Surah Mumtahina. He prays:-

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

“Oh my Lord! Don't make us fitna (test) for these people who are non-believers.”

Origin of ‘fitna’ is ‘fitan’. When the gold is to be purified of its impurities, it is burnt; this process is called ‘fitna’. It is now implied for test and evaluation. Hence the sufferings, the people undergo are called ‘fitna’. That’s the reason Qur’an calls wealth, children and status as ‘fitna’ and clearly announces that the *Momin* (true muslim) is tested on this standard to evaluate his truth and falsehood.

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ()

(عنكسوت)

“Do people imagine that they will be let (free) when they say, ‘We believe’, and will not be tried?” (Al-Ankabut--V. 2)

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ (انفال)

“And fight them until there is no sedition and religion is all God's.” (Al-Namal--V. 39)

1. Ibrahim prays the Lord Allah: “Give me a life, word and deed, pace and talk, that is an excellent example for all human beings. If I am to be a guide, I may be one of such character on the straight path and with constancy. Not such that when on Judgment Day my followers are questioned, they answer:

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبْرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلًا ()

“And they say, Our Lord! Lo! We obeyed our rulers and great men, and they misled us from the way.”

(al Ahzab Verse 67.)

That is, if guidance and leadership are to be his, he may leave behind an example that will take him to a place among the auliya , friends of Allah and the secret of his life; enemy to the friends of Satan. This interpretation is correct in the context because the words of the previous Surah are:

وَبَدَأَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا
بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ ()

"And hostility has begun between you and us for ever until ye bring faith on Allah the One."

And in the following Verse the character of Ibrahim's followers is mentioned.

2. Ibrahim's concise prayer is: "Our Lord! Leave us not in the hands of the unbelievers to be a source of fitna for them, that they may distract us from our faith and put us to all manner of suffering in order to tempt us to go over to disbelief, and through tyranny and compulsion, become so daring as to make us wander off the straight path to the crooked path."

It has been stated just before the latter Verse that Ibrahim and his followers had announced in the face of the polytheist chiefs of status and authority that they rejected their superstitions and beliefs and there is an open challenge from Islam to them. Ibrahim considered that being, after all, human, he needed Allah's help to keep the polytheists away from dominating him and those with him. He had announced his opposition and abhorred the thought of becoming a trial or fitna lest they become renegades.

3. By the word *fitna*, Ibrahim means 'severe punishment which is one of the many forms of *fitna*. Ibrahim prays that he may never be reduced to such a helpless condition by being made to suffer in different ways that "we" may become overawed and begin to think that "our suffering is due to being in the wrong, and the opulence and, the creed of the polytheists being wrong in Allah's sight, He would not have blessed them with wealth and status. And thus "we" are unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

For us Ibrahim's prayer is a lesson and deep vision. During the last century, specially, the world of *Islam having taken to unIslamic ways has fallen subject* to alien powers. They have made us so helpless that even pure thinking and action have become paralyzed. We are so overcome by inferiority complex that we say without shame or fear that Islam is not the name of serving Allah nor of faith and good deeds but only of material power and government and by their means of luxury and pleasure prayers and fasting and zakat are meant only for discipline and law and order; they are not life's objectives. This is the only reality of that paradise which has been promised in

the Qur'an. If this is not achieved, the other name is hell. The Judgment Day and heaven and hell are but imaginary names, which can never take concrete shape.

Those nations, which possess power and -pleasure and respect by means of power, are not mentioned in the Qur'an. True Muslims are only those people, they deserve distinction, not Allah-worshipping Muslims, those deprived of wealth. Allama Mashriqi's book Tazkira echoes such thoughts, such thinking for keeping our youth ignorant of Islam. It was the prescience of such a state that made Ibrahim, prophet of prophets, builder of the Ka'ba tremble and in all humility pray Allah to preserve him from such life and never let a time come upon them when the believers in Him the One and Only may sink to such low depths that they become unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood:

رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ () رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً
لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ()

Second Occasion:

Among the prophets Surah e Shu-ara mentions there is also reference to Ibrahim. While inviting the people to the straight path, he abruptly turns to pray with arms stretched out, as though inviting them by a different way to the worship of Allah.

وَلَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ

"And do not disgrace us on the Day of Resurrection!"

With reference to this Verse Bukhari in his Jama' us Sahi, briefly in Kitab ul Tafsir and in detail in Kitab ul Anbiya, quotes from Abu Hurayra, Radi Allah u Ta'la an-hu., "On Judgment Day Ibrahim will see his father in bad state and blackened face and will say, O Allah! Thou didst hear my prayer on earth:"

وَلَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ

"How am I then being so put to shame?"

And Allah will say: "Ibrahim, I have forbidden paradise to unbelievers."

This Tradition is given in Kitabul Anbiya with some addition:

On Judgment Day when Ibrahim sees his father with blackened face and in bad state, he will say to him, "Did I not tell you again and again not to oppose my counsel. Aazar will say, "What is done is done; I will not oppose you in future from this day on." Ibrahim will, then, turn to Allah and say, Lord! Thou

hads't accepted that prayer.

But what can be worse shame than this that my father is so far away from thy mercy. Allah will say, 'In truth, I have forbidden paradise to unbelievers'. Then Hatif will call out, (and in some traditions, Allah will call), "Ibrahim, look what is below your feet. Ibrahim will look and see that a badger, bijou, is rolling in filth. Angels will catch it by its legs and throw it into hell."

The picture drawn of Aazar in the traditions is exactly that of unbelievers as given in Surah e Abasa:

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ () تَرَهَقَهَا فَتْرَةٌ () أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْكَافِرَةُ الْفَجْرَةُ ()

"And other faces on that Day with dust upon their faces, veiled in darkness. Those are the disbeliever, the wicked."

(Abasa, 40-42)

In Surah e Yunus we have a portray of the people of heaven

لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلَا ذِلَّةٌ
أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ()

"For those who do good is the best (rewards) and more (thereto). Neither dust nor ignominy cometh near their faces. Such are rightful owners of the Garden. They will abide there for ever"

The more detailed tradition gives two new things. Firstly, that Ibrahim will refer the above mentioned prayer after seeing this condition of Aazar, which (the prayer) would have been accepted. This implies that Ibrahim takes his father's humiliation as his own humiliation, and secondly that Allah turned Ibrahim's father into a badger.

Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani believes that Allah will distort turn Ibrahim's father so that Ibrahim may not feel dejected about his father being consigned to hell, which he would feel if Aazar were left in human shape, a dejection that had overtaken him on seeing him blackened and foul. On seeing the transformed shape Ibrahim by nature would be repelled.

And the reason why he would become a badger is that among the wild animals it is both filthy and also foolish to the extreme, two characteristics of Aazar, who was unclear because of being a polytheist, and a fool because of his rejection of Ibrahim's arguments.

But the well known traditionalist Ismaili rejects this whole Tradition, in spite of its credentials. He says, "The weakness of this Tradition is that it accuses Ibrahim of doubting Allah's keeping true to his promise. He is a great prophet knowing well that Allah never goes back on His promise,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ

Ibrahim knowing his father's life and death could never put such a question to Allah."

Besides Ismail, there are other traditionalists who have discussed this narrative. They say that this Tradition is quite obviously opposed to the Qur'an:

وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ مَوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَّهَا أَيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ ()

"The prayer of Ibrahim for the forgiveness of his father was only because of a promise he had made to his father but when it had become clear unto him that he (his father) was an enemy to Allah, he (Ibrahim) disowned him. Lo Ibrahim was soft hearted and solemn" (Tauba Verse 114)

These words show that Ibrahim knew in this world when alive that his father remained an unbeliever throughout his life and, therefore, he had expressed his disgust for him, telling the world that Allah's friend could possibly have nothing to do with Allah's enemy!

Quoting the two versions, Hafiz Ibn Hajar's rejoineder to both is "There are two opinions regarding the time of Ibrahim's expression of disgust with his father one from Abdullah Ibn Abbas. Ibn Jarir records that when Aazar died as a polytheist and unbeliever, Ibrahim was convinced that he had breathed his last as an enemy of God, and, therefore, he withdrew the promise he had made him that he would pray Allah to forgive him and declared his abhorrence of the man.

The other version, also quoted by Ibn Jarir, is that Ibrahim's abhorrence of Aazar was not in this world but will take place on Judgment Day, and exactly as described. That's why when Aazar was disfigured and transformed, Ibrahim was convinced that salvation was no longer possible for his father.

In terms of the rules of logic, to compromise the two versions, we may conclude that Ibrahim had expressed his aversion and abhorrence for his father in this very life but when he saw the man's deplorable condition his compassion surfaced up again and he once more begged for the erstwhile sinner's forgiveness; but when he saw him transformed, he realised that there was no longer any hope for him. A second time he expressed his aversion and disgust.¹⁸

We conclude from Hafiz Ibn Hajar that the Qur'an, having stated so many prominent virtues of Ibrahim has also mentioned,

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ

Ibrahim was by nature very gentle. One of the manifestations of such gentleness and compassion will be that when he sees his father on Judgment Day, his compassion, always so natural to him, will surge up again,

غَبْرَةٌ عَلَيْهِا قَتْرَةٌ

So overwhelm him though knowing well the perseverance characteristic of great prophets, that he will pray for his father's salvation again. But seeing that there is no side of Aazar's polytheistic life that may be made an excuse for his salvation. Ibrahim will have recourse to that prayer which he made in this life and which had the honor of being accepted on this earth, and presenting his father's shame as his own shame, will remind Allah of that prayer. But Allah, answering that He had forbidden paradise to unbelievers, will remind him that, in spite of His tremendous mercy, He had made the unalterable law that there would be no place for polytheists and unbelievers in paradise. The disgrace of an unbeliever was no cause of disgrace for a believer, however strong the relations might have been before. He should also not forget that this Day was not the world of deeds, but resurrection and retribution and the Balance had been struck up.

At the same time Allah's mercy will create a situation that will cause the effects of complaint to disappear from Ibrahim which had made him pray for salvation. So Aazar would be changed to a bestial form which would cause Ibrahim to be repelled.

Briefly then, Ibrahim's question was not because he doubted Allah's promise,

¹⁸ Kitab ul Tafsir Vol. 8.

but was made by a natural compulsion, which though could not alter natural consequences, yet can project natural virtues and good characteristics. Although this rejoinder of Hafiz Ibn Hajar lightens Ismail's taunt and that of several other Traditionalists, it cannot be denied that several portions of Bukhari's Traditions from Abu Hurayra are inconsistent, doubtful and unconvincing. Ibn Kathir quotes these versions in his book Kitab ul Tafsir, accepts the brief Traditions, and considers the longer version in Bukhari's Kitab ul Anbiya as unsupported by another and Nisai to be weak and fragmentary. The well-known Traditionalist Kirmani has attempted to solve the problem by question and answer.¹⁹



¹⁹ Fath ul Bari Vol. 8 Kitab ul Anbiya.

HAZRAT ISMAIL

Birth

One day, when Abraham had not yet become father, he prayed to Allah that being childless and Eliezer virtual master of the house, he may be granted a son.

“And Abram said, Lord, Allah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damscus”

“And Abram said, Behold to me thou hast given no seed, and lo! One born in my house is my heir.”¹

And his prayer was answered in this way that “ he went in unto Hajira and she conceived.”²

“And when Sarah dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.”

But when Sarah found this out she became envious of Hajira and began harassing her. Hajira was thus compelled to leave Sarah’s house.

On the way there was a water well at the place where Hajira spoke with an angel. She named the well The well of one expected to live.

“And the angel of the Lord found her beside a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hajira, Sarah’s maid, whence come set thou and whither wilt thou go. And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarah.

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands;

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and call his name Ismail ; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.

¹ Genesis Ch. 15/ 2-5.

² Genesis Ch. 16 Verse 4.

And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.³

Shortly after she gave birth to a boy and, according to the angel's tidings, was named Ismail.

“And Hajira bare Abram a son; and Abram called his son's name which Hajira bare, Ismail.

And Abram was four score and eighty six years old when Hajira bore Ismail to Abram.⁴

After Ismail, Allah gave Abraham tidings of the birth of Isaac;

But Abraham was not over-pleased with the tidings and, instead, prayed to Allah:

“And Abraham said unto Allah, O that Ismail might live before Thee!”⁵

And Allah answered Abraham's prayer in this way:

“And as for Ismail, I have heard thee. I have blessed him and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.”⁶

The word Ismail is a compound of two words, the Arabic *sama* and Hebrew *El* which stands for Allah; The Arabic *sama* means, to hear, and is pronounced in Hebrew as *sham'a*. Because Abraham had heard the tidings of the son's birth from an angel and Hajira had the counsel also from an angel, this was the name given to the child. In Hebrew the name is pronounced as Shmael.

Ismail's birth caused Sarah great anguish. She was Abraham's first spouse and had for a long time been mistress of his house, and had served him well all her life, it was natural, as a human being, that Hajira should cause her such mental uneasiness. This was the reason that made Sarah insist Abraham that Hajira should not remain before her eyes, and he should take her away to another place.

³ Genesis Ch. 16/7-12

⁴ Genesis 16/15-16

⁵ Genesis 17/18

⁶ Genesis 17/20

Abraham was very displeased with Sarah's persistence but Allah advised him that it was best for Hajira and Ismail that he should do as Sarah wanted.

"And Sarah saw the son of Hajira the Egyptian which she had born unto Abraham, mocking;

"Wherefore she said unto Abraham, cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

"And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son."

"And Allah said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad and because of the bondwoman in all that Sarah hath said unto thee; hearken unto her voice, for in Isaac shall thy seed be blessed. And also of the son of the handyman will I make a nation, for he is thy seed."⁷

These words of the Genesis would mean that Isaac had been born by then which means that Ismail must have come to adolescence by then. Because, according to the Genesis itself, Ismail was thirteen year older than Isaac.

But other verses of the Bible say that Ismail was still an infant.⁸

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hajira, putting it on her shoulder, and the child and sent her away; and she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-Saba.

And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs; and she went and sat down against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot; for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice and wept."

These contradictosy statements of the Bible show that Ismail was still a baby at the time of his being sent away with his mother from Abraham's house and Isaac had not yet been born.

The Tradition recorded by Bukhari quoted by Abdullah ibn Abbas also confirms this. The words are:

"Abraham set off with Hajira and her son Ismail, their nursing son, and left them at the spot where the Ka'ba stands today, and nearby is a big tree on higher land where, under a big tree, the Zam-Zam runs water. This was barren, uncultivable land without any trace of water. Therefore, Abraham also

⁷ Genesis 21/9-13

⁸ Genesis 21/14, 16

left a bag of water and another of dates with them and then turning his face set off. Hajira went after him, saying, "Abraham, you are leaving us where there's not a single human soul, no helper or sympathiser. Abraham gave no answer. Then she asked him, 'Is this by Allah's command? He answered that was so.' She said, 'If this is by Allah's command, there can be no doubt that Allah will not destroy us or let us be wasted. And she returned to her infant son. When Abraham went far away enough that his wife and child could no longer be seen, he turned his face in the direction where the Ka'ba stands today, and lifting his hands, prayed

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ
رَبَّنَا لِتُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفئِدَةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ
مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ () (ابراهيم)

Our Lord! I have made dwell some of my offspring in a barren valley by your Holy House, Our Lord! That they may perform the prayer. So make the hearts of some of the people to yearn for it, and provide them with fruits, perhaps they will be thankful. (Abraham 36)

For several days Hajira's food consisted only of dates and water and she fed her baby on milk. But a time came when there was no water left. Hunger and thirst dried her milk and both mother and infant had to go without nourishment. When their condition became dangerous and the child began to get too restless, so as not able to see her son in such a helpless state she went off and sat down at some distance away. Then she climbed up a hill in the hope of finding water or seeing someone pass who might be of help, but there was none of either. She came back. Then she went up Mount Safa, but again she returned disappointed. Now she went up Marva, and again disappointed returned hurriedly. She climbed up again and again, altogether seven times.

This exercise forms part of the Hajj ceremony to this day.

When she was on Marva the last time, she heard a voice and thought that it was calling her. It came a second time and she said, "If you can be of help, come before me; your voice has been heard." She lifted her eyes and there stood the Archangel Gabriel before her. He struck his ankle on the ground, and water began to bubble out from where he struck. This is the spot, which has come to be known as Zam-Zam. There was so much of water now that Hajira began hastily to build a mound around it.

On reaching this place during Hajj, the Prophet ﷺ said, "This fountain would have been a big spiring, had Ismail's mother not plugged it up."

Hajira drank the water and nursed her infant. Then the Archangel said: "Hajira! Be not anxious for your son. Allah will not let him be in vain. This will be the House of Allah the building of which is written in his fate and that of his father."

The ground of the House of Allah was visible nearby but the flooding water kept levelling it down. In a few days the clan of Banu Jarham came and, yet far off, saw birds flying in the air. This was sign of the presence of water, coming up, they asked for permission to encamp there. Hajira gladly gave permission but conditioned that they would never claim ownership of the water. Jarham accepted the condition and settled down there.

The Prophet ﷺ tells us that Hajira herself wanted neighbours and company. The travelers sent for the rest of their relatives and friends to come and settle here.

Ismail used to play with their children, and learned their dialect. When he grew up, his handsome face and figure and general conduct so pleased them that they married one of their daughters to him. Hajira passed away shortly after. Abraham came frequently to see Ismail and his wife and children. One day when he arrived, he found Ismail absent. He asked his daughter-in-law where he was and she told him that he had gone out in search of livelihood. On inquiring how they were getting on, she answered that they were in very straitened circumstances, suffering and great pain. On departing, he asked her to convey his salaam to Ismail and "tell him to change the sill of the doorway of his house."

When Ismail returned, he inquired if someone had called. She told him of Abraham's visit and gave him his message.

Ismail said, "That was my father, and he advises me to divorce you; so I separate from you."

Ismail married another woman, and when Abraham came to visit him, he found him again absent from home. Questioned, she answered, "Thank Allah, we are doing well". "And what do you get to eat and drink?" She answered, "Meat, and water," And Abraham lifted his hand and prayed:

اللهم بَارِكْ لَهُمْ فِي اللَّحْمِ وَالْمَاءِ

"O Allah! bless their flesh and water"

On departing, he left a message for him. Keep the sill of your doorway always secure." When Ismail returned home his wife gave him the news and the

message. Ismail told her that he was his father Abraham, and that his message meant that she should remain life-long wife of him.

(Alakh)

This is recorded in two places by Bukhari (Kitab al Ruiya and Kitab ul Anbiya), and both show that Ismail arrived in the uncultivable valley of Makkah while still an infant. But Syed Suleman Nadvi in Ard ul Qur'an rejecting or correcting the Biblical version and arguing from the following verses of the Qur'an, states that Ismail arrived in Makkah a grown up boy.

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ () فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ () فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ
السَّعْيَ قَالَ يُسَىٰ إِنَّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىٰ
قَالَ يَا بَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ()
وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ () وَبَرَكَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ إِسْحَاقَ

(صافات)

"My Lord! Vouchsafe me of the righteous. So We gave him tidings of a gentle son. And when (his son) was young enough to walk with him, Abraham said, O my son, I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So, what thinkest thou. He said, O my father!, Do that which thou art commanded. With Allah's grace, thou shalt find me of the steadfast.....And We gave him tidings of the birth of Isaac, a prophet of the righteous. (Safaat Verses 100 and 112)

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بُوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ

(ابراهيم)

"Our Lord! I have settled some of my posterity in uncultivable valley near unto Thy Holy House.

(Abraham Verse 37)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ

(ابراهيم)

"Praise be to Allah Who hath given me in my old age Ismail and Isaac. Lo! my Lord is, indeed, the Hearer of prayers!"

(Abraham v. 39)

In the first Verse of Safaat *balaga ma'ahu al saas-ee* probably indicates that Ismail lived with his father until he had become adolescent, and the last Verse shows that Isaac had been born by then thirteen yrs after Ismail.

Besides, in his prayer, Abraham mentions the names of both his sons.⁹

Syed Nadvi, however is wrong. He traces the Tradition to Ibn Abbas, whom he suspects of being under Hebrew influence, nor do the Qur'anic Verses he quotes support his contention. First, because, to take the words *balagha ul sa-ee* to mean that Ismail lived in Palestine would have been right had Ismail reaching Makkah been mentioned somewhere after these words. In the next Verse, so that it could have been connected with the sacrifice fulfilment on which all the ulema, including Syed Nadvi himself, are agreed, that it took place during the life in Makkah. The Verse tells us that when Ismail reached adolescence his father related his dream to the boy. Thus, according to Syed Nadvi's interpretation, there is great ambiguity in the Verse. It is against the spirit of the Qur'an to create within a Verse such a doubt between two important personalities as disrupts any connection between them.

Secondly: the incident related in Safaat is that of the "tremendous sacrifice, not of reaching Makkah, and that is of the time of his adolescence and after Isaac's birth.

The fact is that although Abraham had left His wife Hajira and son Ismail in a wilderness, he was the son's father and the wife's husband, and a prophet as well; how could he possibly have decided to forget them or become careless about them. He used to visit the family quite frequently. The words *balagha ma'assaee* mean exactly this. Mentioning Isaac is, therefore quite justified. Syed himself contradicting some words of the Genesis, says:

"The Genesis does not state that Abraham came with them; but what tyrant can there be who will pray for a child, life for whom he begged, and then will leave him deserted in a wilderness for ever?"

Similarly Abraham prays:

رَبَّنَا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفئِدَةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ (ابراهيم)

"Our Lord! That they may establish prayer worship, So incline some hearts of men that they may yearn toward them"
(Abraham 37)

⁹ Arad ul Qur'an Vol 2

These words show that he had built the Ka'ba after the incident. Here prayers are mentioned, there is a glimpse of the Hajj, and there is an indication of increasing food supplies. A tradition from Ibn Abbas also mentions this prayer. It was made somewhere near the Ka'ba. Therefore, Ibn Abbas mentions Abraham's prayer by way of *istish-haad*. Not that the prayer was exactly as recorded. When Ibn Abbas himself states that this incident belongs to the time of Ismail's infancy, how could he say that in his prayer Abraham mentioned Isaac along with Ismail's name.

Thirdly, in this barren piece of earth there is no sweet water, and even today, in spite of the achievements of modern engineering, sweet water is not to be found. How then did zam-zam come into being? Both from the point of religion and history this is an important question. Although the Qur'an mentions nothing in this regard, a Tradition from Ibn Abbas recorded by Bukhari show Ismail to be an infant at this time and the Genesis also supports this. Therefore, the story is not borrowed from the Hebrew Scriptures but is expressed by the language of the recipient of Divine inspiration.

The Qur'an here does not mention Ismail directly by name, but without his name it does record the prophetic tidings of his birth. Abraham was childless and prayed for a son and Allah granted his prayer and announced the birth of a boy.

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ () فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ () (الصافات)

O Lord! Bestow on me a righteous son, and We gave him tidings of a gentle boy. (al Saffat)

This was Ismail, born to Abraham's second wife Hajira. For, in the next Verse of the same Surah, the tidings of Isaac's birth are also given:

وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ وَبَارَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ إِسْحَقَ

(الصافات)

And We gave him tidings of the birth of a righteous prophet, and We blessed Abraham and Isaac. (al Saffat)

So when Abraham has two sons, Ismail and Isaac, and according to the Genesis as well as history, Ismail is the elder of the two, it is obvious that the son referred to in the first Verse of Surah e Saffat who can possibly be intended but Ismail.

And when Abraham settled Hajira and Ismail in Mecca he prayed thanking Allah in the same way:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِيْ عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ - (ابراهيم)

All praise is for Allah Who in my old age has bestowed on me Ismail and Isaac. (Ibrahim)

This proves that the "tidings of the birth of a son", referred to in Surah e Saffat can be none other than Ismail.

The Circumcision

Then came Allah's command regarding circumcision. In obedience, Abraham first circumcised himself, then Ismail, followed by the other males of his household, slaves, servants, and others.

"And Abraham took Ismail his son, and all those born in his house, and all these were bought up with his money, every male among the men that were in Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of the foreskin in the selfsame day, as Allah had said unto him.¹⁰

"And Abraham was ninety years old and when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and Ishmail was thirteen yeals old, when he was circumscised the flesh of his foreskin.¹¹

Since then circumcision is practised as a ritual after Abraham's example.

The Great Sacrifice

Allah's way with ordinary people is not the same as it is with His near ones. The near ones have to go through severe trials at many stages of life and they have to give proof of readiness to submit life and acceptance. The Prophet ﷺ has said, "We prophets, each according to his grade, are made to suffer all manner of sufferings."

Because Abraham was a very great prophet, he had to go through many trials and tribulations, and always came out triumphant. When he was flung into the fire, he submitted with the usual submission, patience and acceptance. And on Divine command, he left his infant son, the fruit of his prayers, the hope of his life and light of his house in a barren deserted wilderness, and not once even looked back lest fatherly love surge up and cause him to waver.

Crossing past the two stages, he had now to overcome a third, more difficult than the first two. Three nights together he saw in a dream that Allah was

¹⁰ Genesis Ch. 17, Vs. 23

¹¹ Genesis 17. Verses-24-25.

calling on him to sacrifice his only son. A prophet's dream is always true and a Divine inspiration. Abraham, as the great prophet he was, submitted and prepared himself for the deed. But because the deed involved another person's life, he related the dream to him. And Ismail being a true son of his father, a prophet of high eminence, submitted immediately with a smile, saying, "If such is Allah's will, you will find me patient."

Father and son then went off to a solitary part of the wilderness. At the selected spot Abraham tied the boy's hands and feet, as was done with animals, sharpened his knife and laying him on his forehead, was about to run the knife across his neck, when a voice of Divine inspiration called, 'O Abraham, you have already materialized your dream. This was truly a difficult trial. Loose the boy free and, instead, slaughter the sheep that is standing by you. We reward the doers of good in like manner. Abraham stepped back and saw a sheep attending by the bush nearby. So, Abraham thanked Allah and sacrificed the sheep.

Since then, Muslims all over the world commemorate the event by offering sacrificial animals on the tenth day of the month of Zil Hajj. The festival is known as Eid al Azha.

Does all this not prove that it was Ismail whom Abraham led to sacrifice and not Isaac?

The Qur'an says:

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ () فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ () فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ
السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَبْنَى إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى
قَالَ يَا بَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ()
فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ () وَنَا دَيْنَهُ أَنْ يَأْبُرَهُنَّ () قَدْ صَدَّقَتِ
الرُّعْيَاءُ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ () إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ()
وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ () وَبَرَكَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى إِسْحَاقَ

(الصافات ع ٣)

My Lord! Vouchsafe me of the righteous. So We gave him tidings of a gentle son. And when (his son) was young enough to talk with him. (Abraham) said: O my son I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So look, what thinkest thou? He said: O my father! do that which thou art

commanded. With Allah's grace thou shalt find me of the steadfast. Then when they had both surrendered (to Allah) and he had flung him down upon his face, We called unto him. O Abrham! Thou hast already fulfilled your dream. Lo! Thus do We reward the good. Lo! That verily was a clear test. Then We ransomes him with a tremendoud victim. And We left for him among the later folk (the salutation) Peace be unto Abraham! Thus do We reward the good! Lo! He is among the believing slaves. And We gave him tidings of the birth of Isaac, a prophet of the righteous. And We blessed him and Isaac.
(*al Saffat Vv. 99-112*)

These Verses mention the two sons of Abraham. Of them Ismail is not mentioned by name but as *Ghulmin hakeem* and his sacrifice is described as *zibah e azeem*, and subsequently, tidings of the birth of the second son whose name is given, are mentioned. And it is a decided fact that of the two Ismail is the elder. As the name of the younger one is given in the latter Verse, who but Ismail can be intended in the previous Verse? It cannot be doubted that it is Ismail who earned the honour of becoming a Tremendous Ransom for the Sacrifice by declaring, by Allah's grace, thou shalt find me of the patient and by being down upon his forehead. Not only does the Qur'an describe him as being ransomed by a tremendous victim, the Bible, too, if read carefully, proves the same status for Ismail, that it is Ismail and only Ismail who was intended as the sacrificed one.¹²

“And it came to pass after these things that Allah did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Behold here I am.

“And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”

“And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. “And the angel of the Lord called out to him, out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham and he said, Here am I.

“And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for now I know that thou fearest Allah seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

“And the angel of the Lord called out of heaven the second time;

¹² Genesis 22 Verses 1, 2 and 15-16

“And said, by Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son. “That in blessing will I bless thee”.¹³

Reading carefully these two verses and former Verses of the Genesis and noting the words “only son, in former verses.....and that Ismail was thirteen years of age when Isaac was born, is it not proved that ascribing the sacrifice descripton to Isaac was motivated by jealousy, that made the Hebrews interpolate the name Isaac to the words “only son”. It is an addition that contradicts both the Qur'an and the Bible and falsifies a fact of history.

وَذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ -

“It is a bounty of Allah which He bestows on whom He willeth, Verily Allah is Lord of great bounty.

It is astonishing that some ulema too are victims of this error. The arguments they advance in this regard are based on conjecture and we cannot agree with them. They first point out that no name is mentioned in al Saffat Verses along with the words *Bi ghulamin haleem*, and in the following verse the words are “*We gave him tidings of Isaac*, so is ‘ghulamin haleem’ not this Isaac?

What possibility is there, according to Arabic grammar, that when two sentences are separate and, one person is described in one, the second sentence may be joined to it merely bcause some person is mentioned in it. Who must be held to be the same person, specially when the tidings about them are differently and separately given and their descriptions too are stated separately.

The author of Qasas ul Anbiya Abdul Wahab Najjar clarifies that the pronoun in the words *wa barakna alay-hi* and *ala Ishaq* refers to the *zabih*, the sacrificed one. He translates, We sent down blessings on the *zabih* and on Ishaq. To mention tidings of Isaac's birth after narrating the whole story is clear proof that the subject of the narration is some other than Isaac. This ‘other’ can only be Ismail.

Moreover, the event took place near Makkah and the words of the Genesis “only son” show that Isaac was not born yet. To say that the event took place near Morya is another interpolation of the Bible, one of the several to be found in every chapter of it. Here we mention only the relevant episodes.

¹³ Genesis 22 Verses 15-17

The Ka'ba

Although Abraham lived in Palestine, he used frequently to visit Hajira and Ismail. It was during one of these visits that Allah commanded Abraham to build a house of worship, the Ka'ba. Abraham talked about it with Ismail, and both father and son set about building the *Bayt ul-Lah* the House of Allah.

Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani writes in his *Fath ul Bari* that the first foundations of the Ka'ba were laid by Adam, to whom the angels indicated the site for its construction, but the passage of milleniums erased it. Almost entirely, reducing it to a mere mound. This was the spot Abraham recognized by Divine inspiration to build on. In the course of the foundations being dug, remains of the former structure began to surface. On this spot the reconstruction work was started. However the Qur'an does not mention all this; it begins with Abraham. We conclude that idolatry prevailed in every nook and corner of the earth and temples were built for the worship of stars and images. In Egypt there were temples to the sun-god, and Azdiees, Ezius, Horius and Baal. Assyrians constructed the images of Baal and that known as the Sphinx (Abul Haul) to project their physical strength. The people of Gharra used to make offerings at the altar of a fish goddess, in the shape of a mermaid. Ammunites had their sun and moon-god and goddess and made big temples to their honour. Persians worshipped fire and had temples for the purpose. Christians set up churches with images of Jesus and the Virgin Mary installed in them. Hindus had thousands of gods and goddesses, such as Gautam the Budha, Ram Chandraji, Mahavir, Kali Devi, Sita Devi, Parbati Devi, to each of whom temples were constructed. Hardwar, Prayag, Kashi, Puri, Taxila and Budh-Gaya are well-known names of cities dedicated to them.

But for the worship of the One and only True Allah and in acknowledgment of His Unity and for His worshippers to bow their heads down to Him, in other words, for expression of the exaltation of Divine Oneness, the first place in the midst of idolatry temples, the first to be called the House of Allah was this House.

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ()

(آل عمران)

"Verily the first house built for mankind is that in Makkah and is blessed and a guidance for the world." (Aal e Imran)

Its construction has the honour of having a great prophet like Abraham and another prophet, his son, the sacrificed one, *zabih Allah*, as its masons. And when its walls reached too high for Abraham's hands, a rock naturally

appeared to be used as a scaffolding to assist him, Ismail supported it with his hands and Abraham mounted it to continue paving the walls, this is the spot known as *Muqam e Ibrahim* (the Place where Abraham stood). When the construction reached the height where the Black Stone is affixed, the archangel Gabriel guided him and carved it out of a hill and gave it to him. It is known as the Stone brought from paradise so that it might be installed here.

At the completion of the House of Allah, Allah told Abraham that the place is for his millat to turn their faces towards (Qibla), the point of direction to bow themselves before Him. For that reason it is the center of Tauheed. Then Abraham and Ismael prayed to Allah that He instruct them and their offspring in prayers, grant them perserverance and bless the place with fruit and other foods, and incline all rightly guided ones among the inhabitants of the earth so that they may flock here from far off places to perform Hajj, and gather together to obtain blessings from this place of guidance.

The Glorious Qur'an has announced in a variety of styles in several places praise for Abraham and Ismael during the construction of the Ka'ba for establishing prayers, expressing ardent zeal for performing the rituals of Hajj and the House of Allah being the Centre of Tawheed (Divine Unity).

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبْرَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ () فِيهِ
 آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ () وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ
 حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ
 عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ () (آل عمران ع ١٠)

"Lo! The first sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Becca, a blessed place, a guidance for the peoples wherein are plain signs of Allah's guidance; the place where Abraham stood up to pray and whoso entereth it, is safe. And pilgrimage to is a duty unto Allah for him who can find a way thither. As for him who disbelieveth, let him know that Allah is independent of all creatures." (Aal e Imran 96)

وَأَذَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
 وَأَسْمِعِيلَ أَنْ طَهَّرَ بَيْتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ ()
 وَأَذَقَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ
 مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ

أَضْطَرُّهُ، إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ النَّارِ، وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ () وَادْبُرْفَعِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْقَوَاعِدَ
 مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ()
 رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةٌ مُّسْلِمَةٌ لَّكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَآ
 سِكِنًا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ () رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ
 رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
 إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ () (البقره ع ١٥)

"And when We made Our House at Makkah a resort for mankind and a sanctuary, saying, Take as your place of worship the place where Abraham stood to pray, and We imposed a duty upon Abraham and Ismael, (saying): Purify My House for those who revolve around it and for those who meditate therein and for those who bow down and prostrate themselves (in worship). And when Abraham prayed, my Lord! make this region one of security and bestow upon its people fruits, upon them who believe in Allah and the Last Day. He answered, as for him who disbelieveth, I shall leave him contentment for a while, then I shall compel him to the doom of Fire --- a hapless journey's end. And when Abraham and Ismael were raising the foundations of the House (Abraham prayed): Our Lord accept from us this duty. Lo Thou, only Thou art the Hearer, the Knower! Our Lord! and make us submissive unto Thee, and of our seed a nation submissive unto Thee; and show us our ways of worship; and relent towards us; Lo! Thou, only Thou art the relenting the Merciful! Our Lord! and raise up in their midst a messenger from among them who shall recite unto them Thy revelations, and instruct them in Thy Scripture and in wisdom and shall purify them. Lo! Thou, only Thou art the Mighty, the Wise. (al Baqar)

وَادْبُرْنَا لِبِأَبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكَ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهَّرَ بَيْتِي
 لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ () وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ
 يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ () لِيَشْهَدُوا
 مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا النَّمَّ اللَّهُ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَةٍ عَلَىٰ

مَارَزْتَهُمْ مِنْ، بِهَيْمَةِ النَّعَامِ ۚ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ ()
 ثُمَّ لِيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلِيُوفُوا نُدُورَهُمْ وَلِيَطُوفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ ()
 ذَلِكَ ۚ وَمَنْ يُعْظَمْ حُرْمَتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ ۚ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ ۚ وَأُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ
 النَّعَامُ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ
 الزُّورِ () حُنْفَاءَ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا حَرَّمَ
 مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخَطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوَى بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ ()
 ذَلِكَ ۚ وَمَنْ يُعْظَمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ () لَكُمْ فِيهَا
 مَنَافِعُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ مَحِلُّهَا إِلَىٰ الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ () (الحج ع ٤)

"And remember when We prepared for Abraham the place of the Holy House, saying ascribe thou nothing as partner unto Me, and purify My House for those who revolve around it and for those who stand and for those who bow and prostrate. And proclaim unto mankind the pilgrimage. They will come unto thee on foot, and on every lean camel, they will come from every deep ravine that they may witness the things that are of benefit to them; and mention the name of Allah on appointed days over the cattle that He hath bestowed on them. Then eat thereof and feed therewith the poor unfortunate. Then let them make an end of their unkemptness, and pay your vows and go around the ancient House (That is the command). And whose magnifieth the sacred things of Allah, it will be well for him in the sight of his Lord. The cattle are lawful unto you save that which hath been told you. So shun the filth of idols and shun lying speech, turning to Allah (only), not ascribing partners unto Him, for, whosoever ascribeth partners unto Allah, it is like if he had fallen from the sky and the birds had snatched him or the wind had blown him to a far off place. (That is the command). And whoso magnifieth the offerings consecrated to Allah, it is surely from devotion of hearts. Therein are benefits for you for an appointed term; and afterward they are brought for sacrifice unto the ancient House. (Al Hajj)

وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنَاهَا لَكُمْ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ ۖ فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَافً ۚ فَإِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوبَهَا فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطِيعُوا الْقَانِعَ وَالْمُعْتَرَّ ۗ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرْنَاهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ () لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهُ لُحُومَهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَى مِنْكُمْ ۗ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتَكْبُرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَيْكُمْ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِينَ () (الحج ع ٥)

And the camels We have appointed them among the signs of Allah. Therein ye have much good. So mention the name of Allah over them when they are drawn up in line. Then when their flanks fall (dead), eat thereof and feed the beggar and the supplicant. Thus have We made them subject unto you that haply ye may give thanks. Their flesh and their blood reach not Allah, but the piety from you reacheth Him. Thus have We made them subject unto you that ye may magnify Allah that He hath guided you. And give good tidings (O Muhammed) to the good. (al Hajj Vs. 36 , 37)

Children of Ismail

The Qur'an and Traditions give no detail about Ismail's children. But the Bible mentions them, each separately from the other and in detail. According to it, he had twelve sons each of whom became a chief, heading an Arab tribe of his own. He also had a daughter by the name of Bashama or Mahlat.

“Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham”.

“And these are the sons of Ismail by their names according to their generations; the firstborn of Ismail, Nebajoth and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam and Mishma and Dumah and Massa, Hadar and Tema, Jetur, Naphsh and Kedemah”.

“These are the sons of Ishmail and these are their names by their towns and by their castles twelve princes according to their nations.”¹⁴

Of them the two eldest, Nabut or Nebajoth and Kedar are famous and are frequently mentioned in the Bible & Arab historians too throw considerable light on them. Descendants of Nabut came to be known as Ashab ul Kahf and

¹⁴ Genesis Ch. 25 Verses 13- 16

the descendants of Kidar as Shab ul Rann. Very little is known about the other ten brothers and their children. The Qur'an mentions Ismail in many places. Of them only once his virtues are not mentioned. This is the Verse pertaining to his sacrifice, and in two places where tidings of the birth of a son are given to Abraham, and in Surah e Maryam he is mentioned by name together with some of his virtues.

وَإِذْ كُنَّا فِي الْكُتُبِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا
نَبِيًّا () وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًّا

(مريم ع ٤)

"And make mention in the Scripture of Ismail. Lo! He was a keeper of his promise and he was a messenger (of Allah), a prophet. He enjoined upon his people worship and alms giving and was acceptable in the sight of his Lord.

(Maryam 54, 55)

Ismail died at the age of one-hundred-and-thirty-six. By that time his descendants were spread over the Hejaz, Syria, Iraq, Palestine and as far as Egypt. The Genesis tells us that his grave is in Palestine¹⁵ and it was here that he died, but Arab historians say that he and his mother Hajira are buried within the Haram Sharif.¹⁶



¹⁵ Genesis Ch. 25.

¹⁶ Tarikh e Tibri Vol-1.

HAZRAT ISHAQ (Isaac) ﷺ

When Abraham was a hundred years old, Allah sent him tidings of the birth of another son, this time by Sarah, and that when he was born he should be named Isaac. In the words of the Bible:

“And Allah said unto Abraham, as for Sarai thy wife thou shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.

“And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations, kings of peoples shall be of her”.

“Then Abraham fell upon his face and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old, and shall Sarah that is ninety years old, bare? And Abraham said unto Allah, O that Ismael might live before thee!”

“And Allah said, Sarah thy wife shall bare thee a son indeed, and thou shall call his name Isaac.”

(Genesis: Ch. 17 verses 13-19)

And in the Qur'an we have:

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبَشْرَى قَالُوا سَلَمًا ۗ قَالَ سَلَامٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيذٍ (١) فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً ۗ قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِ لُوطٍ (٢) وَامْرَأَتُهُ قَائِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَا بِهَا بِإِسْحَقَ ۗ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ إِسْحَقَ يَعْقُوبَ (٣) قَالَتْ يَوَيْلَتِي ۖ أَلِدُ وَأَنَا عَجُوزٌ وَهَذَا بَعْلِي شَيْخًا ۗ إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ (٤) قَالُوا اتَّعَجِبِينَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ رَحِمَتُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ ۗ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ (هود ع ٧)

“And our messengers came unto Abraham with good news. They said, Peace! He answered, Peace! and delayed not to bring a roasted sheep. And when he saw their hands reached not to it, he mistrusted them, and conceived a fear of them. They said, fear not, we are sent unto the folk of Lot. And his wife laughed when we gave her tidings (of the birth of Isaac, and after Isaac, of Jacob). She said, Oh woe is me! Shull I bear a child when I am an old woman, and this my husband

is an old man. Lo! This is a strange thing! They said, Wonderest thou at the commandment of Allah? The mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you, O people of the house! Lo! He is Owner of praise, Owner of Glory. (Houd 69-72!)

فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَحَفْ وَبَشْرُوهُ بَغْلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ ()
 فَأَقْبَلَتِ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صِرَةٍ فَصَكَتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ ()
 قَالُوا كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ ()

(الذاريات ع ٢)

"Then he went apart unto his house folk so that they brought forth a fatted calf. And he set it before them, saying will ye not eat? Then he conceived a fear of them. They said, fear not! and gave him tidings of the birth of a wise son. Then his wife came forward making moan and smote her face and cried, A barren old woman! They said, even so saith the Lord, Lo! He is the Wise, the Knower! (al Zaariyat 26-30)

قَالَ إِنَّمِنْكُمْ وَجِلُونَ () قَالُوا لَاتَوْجَلْ إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ () قَالَ
 أَبَشَّرْتُمُونِي عَلَى أَنْ مَسَّنِيَ الْكِبَرُ فَبِمَ تُبَشِّرُونَ () قَالُوا بَشَّرْنَاكَ
 بِالْحَقِّ فَلَاتَكُنْ مِنَ الْقَانِطِينَ () قَالَ وَمَنْ يَقْنَطُ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ إِلَّا
 الضَّالُّونَ ()

(الحجر ع ٤)

And tell them of Abraham's guests, how when they came unto them they said Peace. He said lo! we are afraid of you. They said: Be not afraid! we bring thee good tidings of a boy possessing wisdom. He said Bring ye me good tidings (of a son) when old age hath overtaken me? Or of what then can ye bring good tidings? They said, We give thee tidings of the truth, so be not of those who despair. Abraham said, who despaireth of the mercy of his Lord save he who is a fool! (Surah e Hajar Vs. 52-56)

The Circumcision

Abraham circumcised Ishaq when the infant was eight days old.

“And Abraham circumcised his son Ishaq being eight days old, as Allah had commanded him.”
(Genesis Ch.21/4)

Abraham was a hundred years old and Sarah ninety when they were given the tidings. Abraham was astonished, and as for Sarah, at that age to mother a child seemed to be ridiculous and she burst out laughing. For that reason the name given the child was Ishaq.

This is a Hebrew word pronounced *Yashac*, and in Arabic means ‘laughing’. Or, perhaps, because the child’s birth was to be an occasion for great happiness and joy for her.

According to Arabic grammar *Yas-haq* is in the aorist tense. It has always been customary among the Arabs to use the aorist as a proper name. Names like Yarab, Yamalak are quite common.

Marriage

The Qur’an does not mention anything about Ishaq’s marriage but the Bible dwells on it at great length. Briefly, Abraham told Eliezer that he would not marry Ishaq to a daughter of the Cananites, but one from among the daughters of his grandparents. Eliezer should, therefore, go to Mesopotamia and tell Abraham’s nephew Bethuel Nabor’s son, to marry his daughter to Ishaq. If he agrees, Bathuel may also be told that Abraham does not wish to separate Ishaq and the girl should be sent to Abraham’s house with Eliezer.

Eliezer went as instructed and, arriving at his destination tethered his camel at a place which turned out to be near where Bethuel’s clan lived. Eliezer was attending to his camel, when a beautiful girl carrying a pitcher of water crossed his sight. Eliezer asked her for some water and she gave it to him and also to his camel. He, then, asked her about Bethuel’s address. She told him that he was her father and took him home and informed her brother Laban about him. Laban treated Eliezer with great hospitality and asked him the reason for his journey. Eliezer gave him Abraham’s message, which Laban was very happy to hear. Then giving his sister Rebekah many things sent her away with Eliezer.

Ishaq then sixty years old had two sons by Rebekah, Esau and Jacob. Of the two sons, Esau was his father’s favourite while Rebekah cared more for Jacob. Esau was a hunter and used to bring home venison and other game for his parents and Jacob stayed home.

One day Esau returned home without any game. So he asked his brother Jacob to give him some of the food he had. Jacob said that it was customary among Palestinians that the eldest brother inherited all the deceased father's property, so if Esau would share the property left by their father, he, Jacob, would give Esau the food he had asked for. Esau said he cared nothing for the inheritance and Jacob could have it all. Jacob then gave Esau the food he needed.

Once, when Ishaq had grown very old and weak of eyesight, he told Esau to go hunting for game and cook some very good food for him. Rebekah overhearing this told Jacob to cook a delicious dinner and take it to his father so that the old man might give him his blessings. Jacob did accordingly. When Esau came home and found the trick played on him, he was very annoyed. Rebekah suspecting foul play in revenge advised Jacob to go away for some time to her brother Laban's house. Jacob went away to spend some time with his maternal uncle. Here he married Laisa and Rachel, one after the other, both Laban's daughters.

This story as given in the Bible is derogatory in tone for a prophet's family is quite in keeping with the interpolated narratives so common in the Bible.

Esau ran away to his grand-uncle the prophet Ismail whose daughter was Bashama, Basama or Mahlaqa, (whichever name be correct). He married other girls too and took his family away to settle down in Yasr.

Hazrat Ibrahim:

As Ismail and Ishaq were mentioned in the Chapter of Ibrahim, therefore, it was considered necessary to throw light on them so that the continuity is not disturbed. In fact these incidents are also related to the life of Ibrahim, therefore, we again reflect on some more incidents relating to the life of Ibrahim.

Abraham was very fond of travelling and discovering scientific facts so that he might be able to convince his audience about the greatness and power of the Almighty Creator and His indivisible Unity. His arguments with Azar, Namrud and his subjects are pointers. And that is why he wanted to find out the facts about life after death. When Allah asked if he doubted Abraham said that he was certain of faith & firm but only wished to be convinced by sight & *haq ul yaqeen*. "All I desire", he explained, is that "Thou makest me see

what will be the state after death”¹.

Allah accepted Abraham's request and told him to get some birds and cut them to pieces, then place the pieces on separate hill-tops and going away to a distance, call the birds to himself. Abraham did as commanded. Then when he called out to the birds, their pieces got together and the birds resumed their former shapes.

إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ ۗ قَالَ أُولَٰئِكَ تُؤْمِنُونَ ۖ قَالَ
بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي ۗ قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ
ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا
وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (١)

(البقره ع ٣٥)

"And when Abraham said (unto his Lord), My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life unto the dead. He said, Dost thou not believe? Abraham said, Yea but (I ask) in order that my heart may be at ease. (His Lord) said: Take of the birds and cause them to incline unto thee, then place a part of them on each hill, then call them, they will come to thee in haste. And know that Allah is Mighty, Wise" (Baqar Verse 260)

We are unable to agree with those people who find fault with the strange meaning given to these words or the commentary of the ancient commentators and Traditionists. Just as it is wrong to indulge in narrating strange and

¹ Belief is firm faith that does not waver under any circumstance or in any condition whatever. It is, therefore, the very foundation for Iman bil haq. But there can be differences in proportion to differences of grades of believers, and is called, Ilm ul yaqeen, am ul yaqeen and haq ul yaqeen. If on any subject, knowledge against ignorance is derived by means of reason to the extent that there is no scope left for doubt or wavering, it is ilm ul yaqeen (belief by knowledge). And if such yaqeen (belief) goes beyond to witnessing and feeling it and corresponds fully with reason, the belief so achieved is am ul yaqeen. (belief by seeing or witnessing). Having achieved ilm ul yaqeen as well as am ul yaqeen, human nature sometimes desires more belief by seeing the reality of it. If this is attained to satisfaction, the stage is that of haq ul yaqeen (true belief). For example, an apple is a very nice fruit, one knows, believes it to be so because everybody tells us that it is nice. It has that reputation. This is ilm ul yaqeen, but when it sees it, smells its fragrance and tastes it, the belief becomes am ul yaqeen, belief by witnessing. And if, further, one goes to where it grows, and further analyses the facts about it, the belief is haq ul yaqeen, of course, there is no limit to analyse and acquisition of knowledge, to state which this is not the proper place.

unusual stories on every occasion, and believe them to be true so it is wrong to reject the miracles which are given in the Qur'an and proved by authentic traditions as false mere interpretations fabricated in the fear that philosophers and intellectual will laugh at them.

The Bible goes on to tell us that Abraham also married a woman by the name of Keturah who gave birth to six boys.

“Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah; and she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak and Shuah”.

(Genesis Ch.25 Verses 1-4)

The Midians founded the Midian clan. The children of Abraham's grandson Wuddan founded the Alikā clan. All future prophets were born of these two clans, including the prophet Shuayb. This is recorded by Qatada and is quoted by some modern historians. But Hafiz Ibn Kathir looks upon the Midians and Alikā as the same people. This is also the current view.

Details follow in the Chapter on Shuayb.



HAZRAT LOOT (Lot) عليه السلام

We have already mentioned that Loot was a nephew of Abraham by whom he was brought up in his childhood. His father's name was Haran. Thus Sarah and Loot were the first Muslims of Abraham's millat.

فَأَمَّنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي -

'I believe in him (Abraham) and I migrate' to my Lord''

Loot and his wife always accompanied Abraham during the latter's travels, even to Egypt. The Bible tells us that both Abraham and Loot had an abundance of riches, cattle and sheep, and there was constant bickering between the keepers of one master's flocks and the other's. Abraham talked the matter over with Loot and, by mutual agreement, it was decided that Loot should go east to Jordan and preach the religion of Abraham over there while Abraham would migrate to Palestine and preach his mission there. Loot, then, went away to Sodom and Gomorrah.²

These two cities were on either side of Jordan, by the Dead Sea. It is believed by the inhabitants today that once this region used to be dry but as a result of the punishment that befell Sodom and Gomorrah, the earthquakes and such caused part of the land to sink below sea level and water filled up the cavity. That is why the place was called the Dead Sea or Sea of Loot.

Whether this is right or wrong, discoveries made a few years ago, show that ancient ruins have been found along the coast of this Sea, confirming what the Qur'an announced thirteen centuries ago.

When Loot came and settled down here, he found that the people were engrossed in sins of all kinds. There was no evil that was not in them and no goodness that could be seen in them. Besides, they were innovators of an unnatural practice, namely they had sexual recourse to males instead of females.

Until that time, no other people in the world knew of such an obnoxious cult. It was these people who innovated this sin now named after one of the cities of

¹ Here both kinds of migration are implied. For God's religion going with Abraham from one place to another, and leaving the religion of his forefathers and going over to another religion.

² Bastani vol 9 P. 537

its birth. Sodom. Worse was that they did not look upon this as bad, immodest or shameful but indulged in it blatantly and talked about it without the least shame.

وَلَوْ طَآذِقَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ
الْعَالَمِينَ () إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ ۗ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ
قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ
(اعراف ع ١٠)

And remember Loot! when he said unto his folk: Ye commit abomination such as no creature ever did before you? Lo you come with lust unto men instead of women. Nay, but you are wanton folk.
(Al Aaraf : 80-81)

Abdul Wahab Najjar tells us that in Greek literature he read about the many misdeeds of these people. One was to plunder itinerary merchants in an unusual manner. Anyone posing as a customer would pick up a thing on the excuse of examining it, and just walk away with it, and the poor outsider merchant could do nothing about it. If he went to complain, some one would come with a broken thing or two and say, "This is what I took away: you can take it back." The miserable merchant could only say, "What will I do with this? Where I have lost so much, you can take this also" And the matter would finish there. Then another would come and, after the same kind of dialogue, his case too would wind up in the same manner.

In the same book Najjar read a story about Abraham's servant Eliezer of Damascu. Abraham sent Eliezer to visit Loot and inquire about his welfare. When he arrived in Sodom, one of the natives taking Eliezer to be a foreigner threw a stone at him so that he began to bleed. The native then came up to him and said, "Since I have made your face red (in oriental countries, the idiom 'red face' implies becoming or making eminent and honourable) you will have to pay me a fee for it." Eliezer approached the local judge and complained. The judge decided that the native's case was right and he was entitled to a payment. Eliezer was so furious that he picked up a stone and flung it at the judge, saying, "Now you owe me a fee, so what I owe this man, you give him." And with these words he bolted from the place.

This story may be true or not, but it does show that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were so notorious that peoples of countries far and near of that time made up stories about them.

Loot and His Mission

Such were the conditions, the lowliness of mind of which Loot tried to relieve the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and to have them lead civilized lives of virtue. With gentleness of speech he used every kind of address to make them give up their ways, but they were too impervious to be receptive and, at last, began saying that if Loot is so pure, why has he come to live among us?

مَا كَانَ حَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ
 أَنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُونَ ()
 (اعراف ع ١)

"And the answer of his people was only that they said (one to another): Turn them out of your township. They are folk forsooth, who keep pure." (Al Aaraf 82)

Loot once told a big gathering of them, You have no sense of discrimination, you do not even see that committing sex with males instead of females is the worst kind of lewdness, and you do such evil misdeeds openly in the midst of full houses and instead of being ashamed of them, you talk about them with great pride as if they were great achievements.

إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُونَ السَّبِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيَكُمُ الْمُنْكَرَ ۗ
 (عنكبوت ع ٣)

For come ye not unto males, and cut ye not the road (for travellers) and commit ye not abomination in your meetings? (Ankabut 29)

These words infuriated the people and they burst out saying, "Let this be the end. We have had enough of your good advises and threats. If your Allah is so angry with our doings, then bring on us His curse with which you have been frightening us so long. If you are really truthful, let the matter be decided now, forever."

فَمَا كَانَ حَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَتَيْنَا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ
 الصَّادِقِينَ ()
 (عنكبوت ع ٣)

But the answer of his folk was only that they said: Bring Allah's doom upon us, if thou art a truth teller. (Ankabut 29)

Ibrahim and the Angels

While this was taking place here, Abraham was strolling in the woods in his country when he suddenly came across three men standing before him. Happy to meet them and hospitable in the extreme he took them home to entertain at his table. A lamb was quickly roasted which he brought and placed before them. But these guests would not touch it. Abraham suspected that they were, perhaps, enemies, because, according to the prevailing custom, an enemy did not partake of the food of one he had enmity with. Abraham also felt afraid. The guests sensing his anxiety, told him not to be afraid. "We are angels of Allah", they told him "and are on the way to Sodom to destroy the place". When Abraham realized that they were not enemies, but angels of Allah, his sympathy for fellow humans and tenderness of heart, overpowered him and he began arguing with the angels on behalf of the folk where Lot was. "How could you destroy a township", he remonstrated, "where a prophet like Lot resided, and was also his nephew and follower of the straight path?" The angels said, "We know all that, but it is Allah's decision that on account of their insistence on immodesty, lewdness and many misdeeds, these people must be destroyed, but Lot and his family will be saved, except his wife who, on account of her siding with the people and certain irregularities, will also have to suffer the same fate.

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبُشْرَى يُجَادِلُنَا فِى قَوْمِ
لُوطٍ () إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ () يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا
إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَاءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ آتِيهِمْ عَذَابٌ غَيْرُ مَرْدُودٍ () (هود ع ٧)

And when the awe departed from Abraham, and the glad news reached him, he pleaded with Us on behalf of the folk of Lot. Lo! Abraham was mild, imploring, patient. (It was said) O, Abraham! forsake this! Lo! thy Lord's command hath gone forth, and lo! there cometh unto them a doom which cannot be repelled. (Houd 74-76)

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ () قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمٍ
مُجْرِمِينَ () لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّنْ طِينٍ () مُسَوِّمَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
لِلْمُتَسَرِّفِينَ () (الذاريات ع ٢)

Abraham said, "and (afterward) what is your errand, O ye sent from Allah?"

They said: Lo! We are sent unto a guilty folk that we may send upon them stones of clay, marked by thy Lord for the destruction of the wanton. (al Zarriyat 31-34)

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا إِنَّا مُهْلِكُوا أَهْلَ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ إِنَّ أَهْلَهَا كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ () قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لَوْ طَآءَ قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِيهَا لَنُنَجِّيَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ الْإِمْرَأَاتُ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ ()
(عنكبوت ع ٤)

And when Our messengers brought Abraham the good news, they said, We are about to destroy the people of that township, for its people are wrong doers. He said: Lo! Loot is there. They said, We are best aware of who is there. We are to deliver him and his household, all save his wife, who is of those who stay behind. (Abkabut 31-32)

Loot told the people that they should consider that he demanded no wages for his labours of preaching among them, his telling them what they should do and what refrain from, his counsels and warnings, that his anxiety for their welfare in this life as well as in the Hereafter, was plainly to be seen.

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمَ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ () إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ()
إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ () فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا () وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ
مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ () (الشعراء ع ٩)

The folk of Loot denied the messenger (of Allah) when their brother Loot said unto them, will ye not ward off (evil)? Lo! I am a faithul messenger unto you. So keep your duty unto Allah and obey me. And I ask of you no wage therefor, my wage is the concern only of the Lord of the worlds.

(Shu-ara 161-164)

Instead of reflecting on these sane words, they threatened him with extradition and stoning. This was the very limit. They refused to mend their ways, so that there overtook them the usual fate that is the certain decision of Allah's appointed law of retribution, ruin and destruction for persistence on evil.

The angels departed from Abraham's house and arrived in Sodom. When Loot saw them at his door, he was worried because of their youthful appearance and good looks, and knowing the character of the town folk.

The people lost little time to find out about their arrival and came to Loot demanding that his guests be handed over to them. He did his best to plead with them that they forego their evil intentions, but in vain. Sensing his terribly awkward position, the angels told him not to be anxious about them, for, they were angels and that Allah's punishment which had now become inevitable was about to befall these accursed people, but he and his family would be saved, except his wife.

As night came, Loot and his inmates in the house escaped by a back-door but his wife who went along a short distance, deserted them and made her way back home. It was the latter part of the night when there arose a terrible sound, so terrifying and mighty that it turned the upside down of the two whole cities of Sodom and Gomorrah followed by a rain of stones which completely exterminated the populations. Once again, there took place what meets the fate of the disobedient and rebellious.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ آلَ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلُونَ () قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ () قَالُوا
 بَلْ جِنَّتِكَ بِمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ () وَأَتَيْنَكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ()
 فَاسْرِبْ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ وَاتَّبِعْ أَدْبَارَهُمْ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ
 وَامْضُوا حَيْثُ تُؤْمَرُونَ () وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ ذَلِكَ الْأَمْرَ الَّذِي دَابَّرَ لَئِيْلًا
 مَّقْطُوعٍ مُّصْبِحِينَ () وَجَاءَ أَهْلَ الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ () قَالَ إِنَّ هُوَ
 لَأَخِي ضَيْفِي فَلَا تَفْضَحُونِ () وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُخْزُونِ () قَالُوا أَوْلَمْ
 نُنهَكَ عَنِ الْعَلَمِينَ () قَالَ هُوَ لَأَخِي بَنِيَّ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَعِلِينَ () لَعَمْرُكَ
 إِنَّهُمْ لَفِي سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ () فَآخَذَتْهُمْ الصَّيْحَةُ مُشْرِقِينَ ()
 فَجَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّنْ سِجِّيلٍ () إِنَّ فِي
 ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ () (الحجر ع ٥)

And when the messengers came unto the family of Loot, he said: Lo! you are folk unknown to me. They said: Nay, but we bring thee that concerning which they keep disputing (that is, their destruction, warnings of which the people doubted) and we bring the Truth, and lo! we are truth tellers. So travel with thy household in a part of the night, and follow thou their backs. Let none of you look back, but go whither ye are commanded. And We made plain the case

to him that the root of them (who did wrong) was to be cut at early morn. And the people of the city came rejoicing at the news (of new arrivals). He said: Lo they are my guests. Affront me not! And keep your duty to Allah, and shame me not! They said: Have we not forbidden you to entertain anyone? By thy life (O Muhammed), they moved blindly in the frenzy of approaching death! Then the (Awful) cry overtook them at the sunrise, and We utterly confounded them and We rained upon them stones of heated clay. Lo! therein are portents for those who read the signs. And Lo! it is upon a road still uneffaced. Lo! therein, is, indeed, a portent for believers. (al Hajar 61-77)

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ () وَجَاءَهُ قَوْمُهُ يُهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ قَالَ يَوْمٍ هُوَ لِيَأْتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تَخْزَوْا فِي ضَيْفِي أَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَشِيدٌ () قَالُوا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا فِي بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيدُ () قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آوِي إِلَى رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ () قَالُوا يَلُوطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَنْ يَصِلُوا إِلَيْكَ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَكَ إِنَّهُ مُصِيبُهَا مَا أَصَابَهُمْ إِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ أَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ () فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّنْ سِجِّيلٍ مَّنضُودٍ () مُسَوِّمَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ وَمَاهِي مِّنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعِيدٍ ()

And when Our messengers came unto Loot, he was distressed and knew not how to protect them. He said: This is a distressful day! and his people came unto him, running towards him and before then they used to commit abomination. He said: O my people! here are my daughters! They are purer for you. Beware of Allah and degrade me not in (the presence of) my guests. Is there not among you any upright man? They said, well thou knowest that we have no right to thy daughters and well thou knowest what we want.

He said: Would that I had strength to resist you or had some strong support (among you). (The messengers) said: O Loot! We are messengers of thy Lord; they shall not reach thee. So travel with thy people in a part of the night, and let not one of you look back, (all) save thy wife. Lo! that which smiteth them will smite her (also). Lo! their tryst is for the morning. Is not the morning nigh? So when our commandment came to pass, we overthrew (that township) and rained upon it stones of clay, one after another marked with fire in the providence of thy Lord (for the destruction of the wicked). And they are never far from the wrong-doers. (Houd 77-83)

فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ () إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ () ثُمَّ دَمَرْنَا
الْآخَرِينَ () وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا فَسَاءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنذَرِينَ () إِنَّ فِي
ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ () وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الرَّحِيمُ () (الشعراء ع ٩)

So We saved him and his household, everyone; save an old woman among those who stayed behind. Then afterwards We destroyed the others. And We rained on them a rain and dreadful is the rain of those who have been warned! Lo! herein indeed is a portent, yet most of them are not believers. And lo! thy Lord, He is indeed the Mighty, the Merciful! (Shu-ara 170- 173)

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَاتِ نُوحٍ وَأَمْرَأَاتِ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا
تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحَيْنِ فَخَانَتَهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ
شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ () (التحریم ع ٢)

Allah cited an example for those who disbelieve: the wife of Noah and the wife of Loot, who were under two of our righteous slaves, yet betrayed them so that they (the husbands) availed them naught against Allah and it was said (unto them) . Enter the fire along with those who enter. (al Tehreem 10)

Issues:

- 1) Loot's words contained in the Qur'an, as quoted above, are:

هُؤلَاءِ بَنَاتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ
هُؤلَاءِ بَنَاتِي إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَعِلِينَ

Here are my daughters, they are purer for you.

That is, to honour his guests, Loot even went to the extent of offering his daughters to the perverts, telling them that if they must satisfy their lust, they could have recourse to his daughters instead. How can a respectable human being, an innocent, a prophet tolerate the mere thought of offering his virtuous daughters to a shameless, evil folk? Ulema give different answers to this question.

- i) Loot did not mean that he was offering them his daughters out of lewd motives. Every prophet is spiritual father of his people whether they believe in him or not, and whether of the *ummat e ajabut* or *ummat e da'wa*, by invitation. Both these whole ummahs are his children. Thus what Loot meant was that his daughters were eligible for them as life partners. Therefore, they should approach them and give up the unnatural evil that they indulged in.
- ii) The Bible and other books tell us that the angels who came to announce the birth of Isaac to Abraham and then proceeded to destroy Sodom were three, and it is impossible that for a mere three the whole population which must have run into thousands should have covetously turned up. What is likely is that there were two chiefs among them who desired Loot's visitors and the rest of those who thronged to Loot's house came only to support these leaders. Loot tried to make these "leaders" forego their base, lewd intentions. And he would make up by marrying his virgin daughters to them. But they declined the offer and told him frankly that they were not inclined to women, and that he knew this very well.
- iii) Loot had, indeed, offered his daughters, but his position was like that of a man who sees someone being beaten up by a bully and he pleads for the poor victim telling the bully to leave the poor fellow alone and beat him instead which, he knows, the bully will never do, whether he be a subordinate or junior. The motive is not to invite being beaten up but to put the bully and assailant to shame. Loot's words were intended to put the miscreants to shame, not actually to hand over his daughters to them. He knew that they would never incline to the girls nor take Loot at his word.

Imam Raazi of Ispahan and Abul Sau'd as well as Abdul Wahab Najjar concede to this interpretation. But in my opinion the first is the more correct. Abdul Wahab is not right in saying that it is not possible that Loot should be taken as the father of these disbelieving women?

We have already explained them that a prophet is always innocent and spiritual father of the people among whom he is sent to preach. It is altogether a different matter that some among them benefit by him (ummat e ijabat) while others do not (ummat e da'awat). Even today it is quite common for elder Muslims to address a young non-Muslim girl as "daughter."

2) When Loot realized that his town folk were bent upon evil with his guests and no appeal had any effect on them, he exclaimed.

لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آوِي إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ ()

Would that I had the strength to resist you, or that I could find refuge with some mighty power

What is this *rukne e shadeed* (mighty power)? Did Loot not rely on Allah Almighty that he thought of some one else to support him? The answer is given in a Tradition recorded by Bukhari. The Prophet ﷺ said:

يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لِلْهُوطِ إِنْ كَانَ لِيَأْوِي إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ وَهُوَ رَبُّهُ وَخَالِقُهُ

(الْحَدِيثُ)

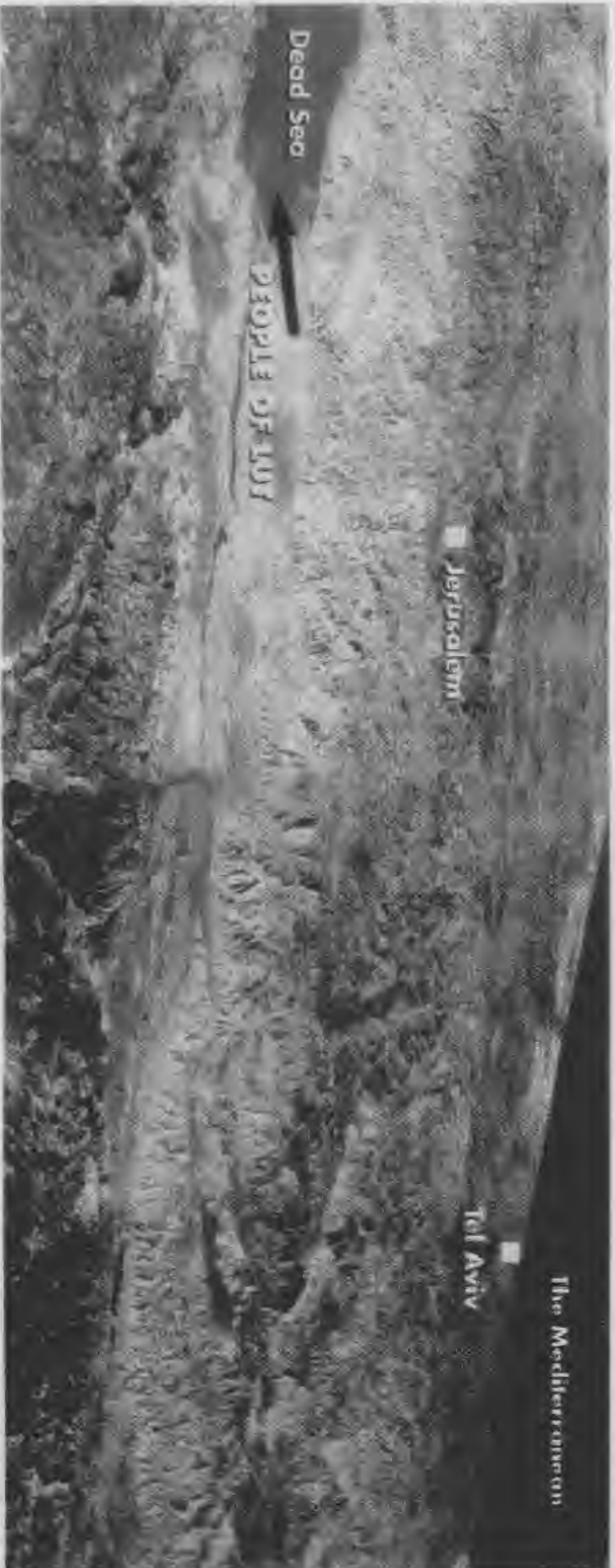
"May Allah forgive Loot (that he was put to such great anxiety) that he looked for a rukn e shadeed; while He (the rukn e shaheed) is his Lord and Creator."

Not that Loot had forgotten Allah and he wished for another power for his support, but that he was in such a predicament that he wished that Allah would give him the support of such a power as would enable him to deal effectively with these perverts. The *Rukn e shadeed*, that is, Allah responded to Loot's yearning and the angels revealed themselves and their mission to him to soothe him. Then, but a few short hours would pass and these miscreants would meet the consequences of their iniquities.

³ Some commentaries take *rukne e shadeed* to imply a family. That when Loot realised how madly pervert and without the least regard for any decency these people were, he, human as he was, longed that had he been attached to a powerful family he would not have had to be in this helpless state. Consequently, after this, God sent His messengers, prophets, only from the family to which Loot belonged. But this is a weak argument. The correct interpretation is that given in Bukhari.



Photographs of the Lake of Lut
taken from satellite.



A satellite photograph of the region where the people of Lut lived.



A distant view of
the Lake of Lut

3) Some commentators understand the addressees of *kum*, "you", to be the angels, meaning that Loot said, "I wish you were in greater numbers to help me against so many I am having to face; or that you might create a condition which would enable me to punish these people. The angels told him in reply:"

(هود) قَالُوا يَلُوْطُ اِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَنْ يَصْلُوَا اِلَيْكَ

"They said, O Loot! we are sent ones of your Lord. They can do thee no harm" (Houd)

The Bible tells us that Loot and his family having left Sodom settled down in Zoar⁴ or Zaghar, not far from that city. When dawn came he looked towards Sodom and saw nothing but destruction over there. He, then, left Zoar also and went to a nearby hill where he settled permanently until his death.

Abraham

Besides the great lessons we learn from this continuous chain of events, Abraham's unique personality emerges as a prophet of most distinguished status. Every prophet invites to Allah's Oneness and condemns duality --- associating partners with Him, (*shyrk*)--. These two values are common to them all, but what is distinctive about Abraham is that he is the first prophet to have suffered great tribulations on his way, the most difficult of trials and he came out triumphant through each one of them.

Consider his old age, a son born to him after his heart's longing and prayer; then comes the command to separate him and his mother and, without the least hesitation, he takes them both to a barren, uncultivable wilderness, and leaves the two in the waterless valley of Makkah!

Then when the son grows up to adolescence, Abraham receives the command to sacrifice the boy and, once again without any vacillation he bows. In these most delicate moments, he neither thinks of fetching an excuse nor of putting off the execution of the command for another time. Morning comes and he does all that his human hands can do, and so, proves his devotion to his Lord.

And the third time, when the king and his subjects decide to burn him alive in a blazing fire. He never foregoes his mission. First, as a mountain, he stands by his belief and duty, still inviting to the path of truth. He remains tranquil all the time; he is flung into the flames, but his Lord and Creator does not let

⁴Genesis Ch 19, verse22

him suffer the least. Instead, the strategem of his enemies is made vain, and for him the fire is turned into *burd to salam* "coolness and peace".

In this way, under the protection of his Supreme Guardian, Abraham continued to propagate the blessings of guidance and light. Besides his constancy and perseverance, he established a precedence for distinguishing between Unity and Duality, tauheed and shyrk.

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا
مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ()
(انعام)

Verily, I have turned my face towards Him Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth as one by nature upright, and I am not of the idolaters. (Al Anaam)

That is, there are two approaches to Allah, the right one and the wrong one. The wrong one is, to believe that it is necessary to worship idols and stars so that they may be happy with us in order that they may make Allah happy with us. This belief is *shyrk* and superstition. Because the attributes which should be reserved only for Allah are attributed to those others than Allah. This is the essence of *shyrk*.

Opposed to this is the faith that there is no way to please Allah except to believe that He alone should be worshipped. He alone should be looked upon as the Resolver of difficulties; that He, and He alone is the Absolute Authority, Giver of life and death, in short of every thing, big or small. And to find out what pleases or displeases Him, it is necessary to believe in the true prophets sent by Him for our guidance. It is not necessary to turn to gods and goddesses for the purpose. Worship of Allah the Supreme alone should be life's sole purpose. This belief is "Islam" and "Truth".

For the first time it was Abraham who defined the wrong way as *shyrk* and superstition and the other as Islam, the straight path, that of the upright. This distinction became so commonly recognized that all future prophets since then used these names for their mission. Even the last of them called his followers the *millat e hanifa* and its followers *Muslim*.

وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا (البقره)

And be followers of Abraham's millat who was upright.

(Baqar)

هُوَ سَمَّاكُمْ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا - (حج)

He named you Muslim and in this Book also.

(Hajj)

This is the reason why the distinguishing characteristic of Surah e Ibrahim is that it contains the advent of the prophets, description of their personalities and effects, all together, and marks out the difference between those who believe and those who do not believe in them and their invitation to guidance, and whether there is any difference between good and evil, obedience and rebellion, acceptance and refusal, And whether the pleasure of any, other than Allah, has any place in good and evil, rejection and acceptance, or whether Allah's pleasure and want of it is true faith?

For these reasons, it is correct to say that Abraham's position in the lives of the holy prophets, *nabis* and messengers, is that of *mujaddid e ambiya* and *rusul*.

Lessons

When the human being fixes any belief in the light of knowledge it gets so firmly rooted in his heart, and soul, that no incident, no pain and suffering can dislodge it from its place, and he can throw himself into a fire, or an ocean of water or submit to being slain without wincing or the least fear. Abraham is a prominent example of such a man.

Only such arguments should be presented in support of Truth as can find their way into the very depths of the heart. Whether the listener admits it or not by word of mouth, he knows it in his conscience, and his heart is compelled to admit it and at times, may even find it impossible to restrain itself from announcing such admission. This is what the words of the Qur'an, *wa ja-dil-hum billati hya ahsan*, argue with them with what is better, mean.

Such is the way of the prophets. They do not go by roads and valleys of dispute and polemics. The foundations of their argumnets are intuition and feeling and what they see; or simply, ecstasy (*wajdaniyat*) and common sense. Abraham's argument with Namrud and his subjects is an excellent example.

To prove the truth of something during a debate is not an admission to make a supposition of a false belief, but simply supposition or hypothesis (*fard ul haatil ma-ul khasam* or *muareed*). This method compels the opponent to acknowledge his mistake. Abraham adopted it in his confrontation with the people, so that they realize that idols can neither hear nor answer back.

If a Muslim's parents are idolaters and persist in their idolatry, they yet must be treated with respect, never with harshness or severity, as was shown by Abraham in his treatment of Aazar and the Prophet in his treatment of Abu Talib.

If a believer is satisfied with his beliefs in the core of his heart, and his tongue and heart are synchronised, yet for visual satisfaction or to achieve *haq ul yaqeen* goes by way of question and answer and yearns for peace of satisfaction of his heart. his search is not disbelief or *kufir*. This is proved by Abraham's words: *wa la kin li yat-ma-inna qalbi*.

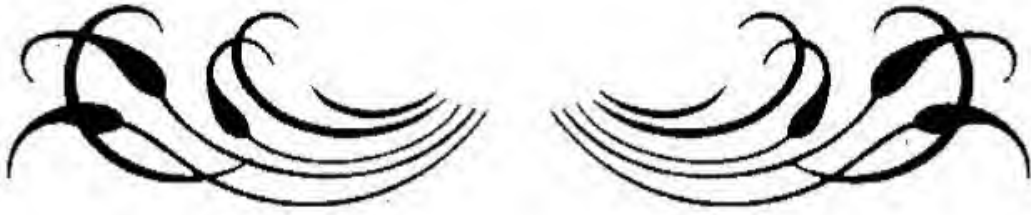
If ostentation and hypocrisy are absent, generosity, hospitality, and broad-heartedness are great and noble virtues, defined in Arabic as among *akhlaq e karimana*, and with such names as *sakha i nafs*, generosity of the self, and *karam*, magnanimity.

This characteristic had become embeded in Abraham's nature. His table was wide for guests; and he respected all who came. Some books have recorded an extraordinary story of Abraham's hospitality. Once Abraham was standing in a deserted place waiting, as was his custom, for someone to come along whom he could invite home for dinner. Without a guest, a table was not spread out in his house nor did he eat. He saw an old man coming whose back too was quite bent and was walking with difficulty with the support of a stick. Abraham stepped forward and well pleased brought him home. The table and foods were laid out. After the dinner, Abraham said, "Now thank Allah the One Who has bestowed these blessings on us." The old man answered rather sharply, "I do not know Who your Allah the One is. I thank my idol who is kept in my house." This reply greatly shocked Abraham and at once made the man depart, a little while after, Abraham realised that "Allah the One Whom I wanted this man to thank is so glorious that He has always bestowed His blessings on this man, and though displeased with the man's idolatry has not closed His doors of munificence on him even once. What right, then, had I to turn him out of my house simply because he did not accept my word of truth?"

Whether this story is believable or not, the fact is that Abraham's generosity was so noble that it was on everybody's tongue, and was, indeed, part of his mission of Islam.

Those whom Allah chooses for His mission's truth, He infuses their hearts and mind with His light so greatly that there exists no longer anything for them except Love of Truth. And, therefore, from their early childhood, they are seen to be distinguished among their fellows, bear their difficulties and trials with joy and exemplary patience. We have Ismail's example before us.

Loot was Abraham's nephew and also a prophet, Allah's messenger. He went to Sodom and Gomorrah and suffered many tribulations but he bore them all with patience and firmness, and, instead of soliciting assistance from his unclean relatives, turned only to Allah the Glorious for carrying out His commands. So exalted are the prophets and near ones to Allah.



HAZRAT YAQOOB (Jacob) ﷺ

Yaqoob (Jacob) was Isaac's son and Abraham's grandson. Bethuel, Abraham's nephew, was his maternal grandfather. His mother's name was Rebekah, whose favourite son he was, while his elder brother, Esau was his father's favourite. We have already narrated on the basis of the Bible the bad relations between the two brothers. When, on his mother's instruction, Yaqoob went away to Padan-aram to spend some time with her brother Laban, the uncle took an oath from him that if he grazed his sheep and goats for ten years, this service would be counted as his dowry and he could then marry one of Laban's daughters. When Yaqoob completed the term, Laban offered him the elder girl Leihā's hand, but Yaqoob showed his preference for Rachel the younger one.

Laban told him that it was customary that the elder sister should marry first, so if Yaqoob wished to marry Rachel, he would have to do another ten years of similar service. Yaqoob agreed. At the end of the term, he married both Leah and Rachel, it being quite legitimate at that time for a man to marry two sisters. Besides the two, Yaqoob also married Zilpah, Leah's handmaid and Bilhah Rachel's handmaid and he had children by all the four of them. Except Benjamin, all his children were born of Laban's lineage.

Having had Yaqoob served him for twenty years, Laban, at the time of sending him off, gave him an abundance of dowry, including sheep and cattle. Yaqoob returned to his grand father's adopted country, Palestine.

After Yaqoob went to live with Laban, Esau, angry with his home-folk, went away to live with his uncle Ismail, whose daughter, Adoom, he married, and settled down not far away.

During this time the ill-feeling that once existed between the two brothers melted away, and brotherly love returned. Mutual exchange of gifts was frequent.

All this is as given in the Bible, the Qur'an mentioning nothing, except that Yaqoob was a great prophet whose outstanding virtue was patience, as borne out in the story of Joseph. Joseph's brothers too are mentioned in this connection.

Yaqoob in the Qur'an

Yaqoob is mentioned in the Qur'an in ten places, several times in Surah e Yusuf together with his virtues but by name only in two places.

<i>Surah</i>	<i>Verses</i>	<i>Number of times</i>
Baqar	37, 133 140,	3
Al Anaam	84	1
Maryam	6	1
Anbiya	72	1
Al Nisa	163	1
Yusuf	6, 38	2
Sa'd	45	1

Israel

In Hebrew, Yaqoob's name is *Israel*: *Isra* slave or worshipper, and *El*, Allah. In Arabic it would be translated *Abdullah*, Abraham's lineage after Yaqoob is known as Children of Israel for this reason.

Yaqoob's Children

Yaqoob had twelve sons, all, except Benjamin, born in Padan -aram.

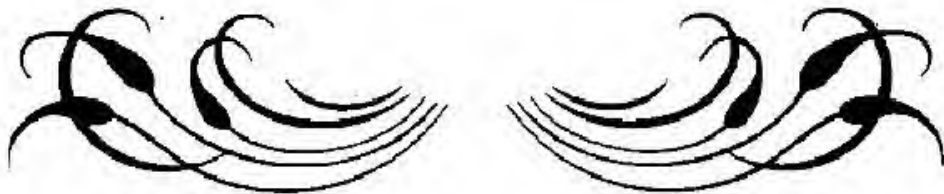
Leah mothered Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun;

Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.

Bilhah: Rachel's handmaid, Dan and Naphtali;'

Zilpah: Leah's handmaid, Gad, and Asher.'

Yaqoob was one of the great prophets of Allah and was sent to the people of Canaan among whom he preached for many years. As he is mentioned in the Qur'an mostly in connection with his son Joseph, we shall narrate him in our narrative of Joseph.



HAZRAT YUSUF ﷺ

(Joseph)

Genealogy:

He is Jacob's son, Isaac's grandson and Abraham's great-grand son. His mother was Rachel, Laban's younger daughter. Jacob loved him exceedingly and could not bear to separate him even for a short time.

He too, like his father, grandfather and great-grandfather, was appointed a prophet on reaching maturity of age, preaching the religion of Abraham's *millat*. From early childhood it was apparent that his natural and mental inclination was quite different from that of his brothers. One of the reasons why Jacob loved him so greatly was that he recognized the light of future prophethood on his face and Allah had informed him about it by inspiration.

Yusuf in Qur'an:

Yusuf is mentioned by name twenty-six times in the Qur'an, twenty-four times of which in Surah e Yusuf, and once each in al Anaam and Ghafir, Yusuf is also distinguished by the fact, that like his great-grand-father Abraham, a whole Surah, comprising a treasury of guidance is named after him.

<i>Surah</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>No. of times</i>
al Anaam	84	1
Yusuf	4, 7, 10, 11, 17, 21, 29, 46, 51, 56, 69, 76, 77, 83, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 94, 99	24
Ghafir	34	1
Total		26 times

The Qur'an describes the story of Yusuf as *Ahsan al Qasas*, 'best of narratives', because it contains in a single account so many lessons, counsels and so much guidance as are not to be found in any other. It is a, fascinating story, distinguished above all others, a lively portrayal of the vicissitudes of time, of the rise and fall, decline and reconstruction of nations, projected through the medium of the story of one individual, It requires no commentary, no explanation. It is a chronicle of a priceless and precious jewel of a Bedouin or a nomadic clan who had been chosen by the miraculous power of the

Glorious Lord to be a prophet and guide to the most civilized people of the time and rule over them.

Unlike the Bible, the Qur'an does not content itself with mere narration of events. While narrating, its objective always is guidance, counsel, presenting lessons, and admonition.

As in this story of Yusuf are hidden so many lessons, significance of guidance, patience over pain and tribulations, steadfastness, expressions of willingness and submission, ascendance and glory of individuals and nations, the marvels of Allah's justice and mercy, human error and its consequences, amazing fruits of. Chastity and self control, without doubt, the chronicle must be the "best of narratives", unique in style and presentation.

الرَّقِيفَ تِلْكَ آيَةُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ () إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَعْقِلُونَ () نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ()

"Alif Lam Ra: These are verses of the Scripture that maketh plain. Lo! We have revealed it, a Lecture in Arabic, that ye may understand. We narrate unto thee (Muhammed the best of narratives in that We have inspired in thee this Qur'an though afore I time thou wast of the heedless."

Surah e Yusuf - (12 verse 1-3)

The occasion for the revelation of Surah e Yusuf was that once the idolaters of Makkah expressed their anxiety to the Jews about the Prophet, telling them that they just did not know what to make of him. The Jews suggested that he should be asked why Jacob's children left Syria and migrated to Egypt, and what were the salient details of Yusuf's life. If this claimant to prophethood was not genuine, he would never be able to tell.

The unbelievers of Makkah did as they were advised and the Prophet answered their questions by Divine inspiration. The answer comprises the narrative of the Surah.

Yusuf's Dream and His Brothers:

The gist of the story is that Jacob being exceptionally fond of Yusuf roused the envy of his brothers and they decided that either their father give up his discrimination or they do something to get rid of Yusuf from his life.

While such conspiracy was hatching, Yusuf dreamt that eleven stars and the sun & moon were prostrating before him, He told his father of the dream and

Jacob advised him not to mention it to anyone lest his brothers coming to hear of it do some mischief to him. Satan always tempting human beings to evil, and the interpretation of the dream being quite plain.

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ (قَالَ يُونُسُ لِي لِمَ تَقصُّصُ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَيَّ
إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ)
وَكَذَلِكَ يَحْتَبِكُ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ
عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى آلِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا أَتَمَّهَا عَلَى أَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ()

When Yusuf said unto his father, O my fathr! Lo! I saw in a dream eleven planets and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating themselves unto me. He said O my dear son! Tell not thy bretheren of thy vision, lest they plot against thee. Lo! Satan is for man an open foe. Thus thy Lord will prefer thee and will teach thee the interpretation of events and will perfect His grace upon thee and upon the family of Jacob as He perfected it upon the fore fathers, Abraham and Isaac. Lo! thy Lord is Knower, Wise. (Surah e Yusuf: 4-6.)

Here there is some difference between the Qur'an's statement and that of the Bible. The Qur'an says that when Yusuf told his father of his dream, his brothers were not present there; while the Bible says that it was in their presence that Yusuf related his dream.

The Qur'an also states that when Jacob heard the dream, he was very happy and foretold Yusuf that he too would become a prophet of Allah, but the Bible tells us that the dream made Jacob very angry, and he reprimanded his son accusing him that he, probably, would like to see his parents and brothers prostrate to him!

Considering the rest of the narrative, which is more or less identical in the Qur'an and Bible, the Qur'anic version seems to be the correct one. It is more likely that Yusuf should naturally speak about his dream when alone with his father, away from his brothers; and the father be very happy on hearing it, because all parents are solicitous about the advancement and high position of their offspring. As a prophet, Jacob could specially foresee in Yusuf's dream his son's rise to great eminence. This prescience would be a source of great felicitation for him, not bitterness and gloom.

Jealousy did get the better of the brothers, but for another reason, inducing them to conspire for the worst.

إِذْ قَالُوا لِيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَىٰ آبَانَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ آبَانَا
لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ () أَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ
أَبِينِكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ () قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا
يُوسُفَ وَالْقَوْهَ فِي غَيْبِ الْجُبِّ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَعِلِينَ ()

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٨-١٠)

When they said: Verrily Yusuf and his brother are dearer to our father than we are, many though we be. Lo! our father is in plain aberration. (One said) Kill Yusuf or cast him to some (other) land, so that your father's favour may be all for you. One among them said: Kill not Yusuf, but if you must be doing, fling him into the depth of the pit, some caravan will find him.

(Surah e Yusuf : 8-10)

After deciding, on their plan, they came to their father and said: "Why don't you send Yusuf with us to enjoy himself? Don't you trust us? Who can be better than us to guard him?"

مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَاصِحُونَ () أَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا
يَرْتَعْ وَيَلْعَبُ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَفِظُونَ () (يوسف ١٢ آيت ١١-١٢)

They said: O our father! Why wilt thou not trust us with Yusuf, when, lo! we are good friends to him? (Yusuf -11)

Send him with us tomorrow that he may enjoy himself and play. And lo! we shall take good care of him. (Yusuf- 12-13)

Jacob suspected that their hearts were not clean and that they were bent upon doing harm to Yusuf; but did not say so in plain words lest they come down to open enmity; but by a faint suggestion they might understand and forego their evil intentions. He, therefore, made it clear to them that he did suspect danger for Yusuf at their hands.

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنَّ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ
وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ ()

Jacob said, In truth it saddens me that ye should take him with you, and I fear lest the wolf devour him while you are heedless of him. (Yusuf 13)

Yusuf's brothers answered in one voice:

لَيْنَ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إِذَا لُحْصِرُونَ ()

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ١٤)

They said, If the wolf should devour him when we are (so strong) a band, then surely we should already have perished! (Yusuf 14)

Here the Bible and the Qur'an differ. the former stating that it was Jacob who ordered Yusuf to go with his brothers to play, but this is not supported by the events that followed.¹

The Cave or Dry Water Well:

The brothers took Yusuf with them on the excuse that he would play with them but when they arrived in the woods, they caught hold of him and let him down in a dry well, and staining his shirt with the blood of some animal returned home.

They wailed before their father that no matter how much truth they speak, he would not believe them. And the truth is that while they were playing and running one after another, a wolf carried Yusuf away.

When Jacob saw the blood-stained shirt, he noticed that it was not torn from anywhere and the collar too was intact, but, instead of getting angry and rebuking, he expressed his feelings as a true prophet, merely telling them that though they devised the best they could not hide the truth.

قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبِرْ جَمِيلًا وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ

عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ () (يوسف ١٢ آيت ١٨)

He said, Nay but your minds have beguiled you into something. (My course is) comely patience. And Allah it is whose help is to be sought in that (predicament) which ye describe. (Yusuf 18)

Yusuf and Servitude:

While this was taking place here, a caravan of Ismailis (Ishmeelites) or Midians on its way from Syria, carrying balsam and spices to Egypt, stopped by the well where Yusuf had been left. Some one of the caravan came to the well in the hope of drawing water and let down a rope and bucket. Yusuf thought that his brothers had, probably, out of remorse, felt compassionate and wished to pull him out. He caught hold of the vessel which when drawn up was found to contain, not water but a human being. The man exclaimed joyfully:

يُشْرِي هَذَا غُلْمًا () (يوسف ١٢ آيت ١٩)

"Good news! We have gotten a slave!"

The Bible says that when Yusuf's brothers saw the caravan, they suggested to one another that they should pull Yusuf out of the pit and sell him. But before they could do so, the Ismailis had already taken possession of him. When the eldest of the brothers, Reuben, arrived at the well, he found that Yusuf was not there, and returned weeping. Reuben from the very beginning wanted to rescuse Yusuf from the pit and quietly bring him back to his father. That is why he had opposed the proposal to kill him.

Some commentators have argued that Yusuf's brothers had taken hiout of the pit and sold him to he caravan, but this contention is supported neither by the Bible nor the Qur'an. It was the caravan people who had taken him out of the pit and directly made him their slave.

Similarly, the Qasas ul Anbiya mistakenly believes that there were two caravans, one that of the Ismailis and the other that of the Midianites. The fact is that there was only one caravan composed of people who were racially called Ismailis, Ishmeelites, and, geographically, Midianites or Hijazi.²

Yusuf in the Egypt:

How many a glorious value is hidden in this phase of Yusuf's life! Let men of vision reflect. The boy is but a child, the mother has passed away, he is separated from his father's loving bosom, place of birth also gone, brothers have been treacherous, there is slavery instead of freedom in sight, yet there is

² The latest investigation reveals that the region known in the Bible as **Midia** is that which stretches along the Red Sea from Syria to Yemen. From the time of **Moses**, the Israelis called it Midia while the Ismailis called it Hijaz. Thus there were two names of one place. (Ard ul Qur'an Vol .2. pp. 47-49)

neither wailing nor weeping nor screaming, nor lamenting nor complaining. He is grateful for his fate, patient over his suffering and totally submissive to Allah's decision, head bowed before Him that he is being taken to be sold in Egypt's slave market!

Two thousand years before Christ, Egypt was looked upon as the world's centre of culture and civilisation. Amalika was ruler when Yusuf entered Egypt. as a slave and Ramses was his capital Potiphar, Captain of his guard, was passing through the market when he happened to see Yusuf, and he bought the lad for but a meagre price.

At the time, Egyptians used to look upon themselves as the most highly cultured and civilized people of the world and looked down on the desert tribal people with contempt. In their towns and cities they 'treated them as untouchables, Abraham's clan belonged to one of these desert tribes and was settled in Canaan. There was not a trace of city life there. Wealth consisted of thatched huts and flocks of goats and sheep, while hunting provided the chief means of subsistence,

Reflect here how Allah does things and works His miracles. A Bedouin, and a slave at that, reaches the house of a wealthy man, a well placed government office-holder, and only because of his high morals, his knowledge, dignified personality and trustworthiness, purity in all respects, captures his heart and becomes the very light of his eyes. Potiphar had told his wife the very day the slave-boy was brought home:

أَكْرَمِيْ مَثْوِيَهُ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا ()

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٢١)

"Receive him honourably. Perchance, he may prove useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son" (Yusuf 21)

Where did Yusuf get his virtues, his high qualities from? The Qur'an answers:

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ، آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا، وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ()

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٢٢)

And when he reached his prime, We gave him wisdom and knowledge. Thus do We reward the good. (Yusuf 22)

Potiphar did not treat Yusuf as a slave but as his own offspring, with regard and honour. In due time the responsibilities of his household, his wealth and its disposal were made over to Yusuf's hands, In other words, this was a

prelude to the superior office, the wide powers the virtual suzerainty of the world that were destined for this shepherd boy of Canaan.

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ
وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَى أَمْرِهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (١)

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٢١)

"Thus We established Yusuf in the land that. We might teach him the interpretation of events. And Allah was predominant in his career but most of mankind know not? (Yusuf: 21)

Master's Wife and Yusuf:

A famous sufi, Ibn Ataullah al Sikandri, holds, "Allah's blessings are often hidden in suffering". Yusuf's entire life is a living portray of this axiom.

The sufferings and trials of childhood, out of nomadic life in Canaan to lordship of the household of one of the leading families of Egypt, seat of culture and civilization. This is suzerainty in slavery.

Now begins the second phase. He is in the prime of youth. There was no aspect of beauty and gracefulness that was not embodied in him. Supremely handsome, face like the sun and moon, chastity unblemished, with all this was the constant presence of the master's wife who could not keep herself under control and fell for him. But he was also Abraham's grandon, light of the eyes of Isaac and Jacob, a member of the clan of prophets, as it were, himself to be a prophet, how could such an one be smeared in unchastely and fall to any woman's seductive evils?

One day, this woman, finding her coquettish blandishments futile, bolted the door of the room from inside where he happened to be, and insisted that he yield. This was a difficult moment, a woman of the royal hierarchy, herself beautiful to look at is not being loved but is herself lover. She has ornaments to bedeck her and set off her looks her wills are seductive, there is no fear of an envious rival, the room is safe and locked, the mistress herself responsible. But he does not for a moment encourage her; he does not waver for a moment, temptation is not effective; no allure emanate makes the slightest impress. He tries to make the woman understand that this is impossible; he cannot disobey the Lord Allah of glory, Owner of the universe. And he is a trustee of his master, her husband, and betraying him would be a breach of trust, an act of cruelty. The master has not treated him as a slave but posted him to a place of honour. If he, Yusuf, did as she wanted, he would be a tyrant and the consequence awaiting tyrants is never of benefit.

But such words made no appeal to her. She insisted all the more, until he had to tell her plainly that it simply could not be.

وَرَأَوَدَتْهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ ۗ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَأَنْفِلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ (۱) وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ ۗ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ (يوسف ١٢ آيت ٢٣، ٢٤)

And she in whose house he was, asked of him an evil act. She bolted the doors and said: Come. He said: I seek refuge in Allah. Lo He is my Lord, who hath treated me honourably. Wrong doers never prosper. She verily desired him, and he would have desired her, if it had not been that he saw the argument of his Lord. Thus it was that We might ward off from him evil and lewdness. Lo! he was of Our chosen slaves.?

The meaning some commentators have give the words *Laqad hamma be-hi wa hamma bi-ha* is not correct. In the context the one given by us is the more appropriate. The whole narrative, beginning to end, as given in the Qur'an, is one of the lewd artifices of Potiphar's wife and Yusuf's virtuous resolve, self-control and chastity. Therefore, this is the only meaning to be taken by the words.

مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ لَأَنْفِلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ (۱)

When the woman, even after hearing Yusuf's argument of his Lord, would not desist from her intention, the only alternative left to him was to tell her plainly in the light of his Lord's argument that he cared nothing for her *hammu*, and to get away from the room as quickly as he could. He made a dash for the door and she ran after him.

Some commentators have objected saying that according to the rules of Arabic syntax, the words *lau-la* must be used at the beginning of the sentence it would be ungrammatical to insert them anywhere in between. But, according to their commentary *lau-la* would be in between.

وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ ۗ (۱)

And Yusuf would have inclined to her if he had not seen the argument of his Lord."

But this objection is superfluous because here again the words *lau-la* are used in the beginning of the sentence.

Therefore, the meaning given by us is the correct one, above doubt and vagueness. Besides, eloquence and lucidity demand here that *hum and bi-ha* should be used together and *lau la* made the precedent.

An example are the words concerning Moses's mother;

إِنْ كَادَتْ لَتُبْدِي بِهِ لَوْلَا أَنْ رَبَّنَا عَلَى قَلْبِهَا ()

(يوسف ٢٨ آيت ١٠)

"She almost gave herself away, had We not strengthened her heart".

That is, Mo's mother was able to control herself because we strengthened her heart; if we had not done so, she would never have been able to keep the secret about him.

Similarly, had Yusuf not been supported by Us, "Our argument", he too would have changed his desire for evil, but he did not because he saw Our argument.

It may be asked, what was the 'Lord's argument'? The Qur'an itself answers the question. That Yusuf saw what pleases Allah, so that "in this way "We may remove immodesty and evil from him." and he remains spotless and chaste. "And doubtless, he is among Our faithful slaves." Yusuf remained spotless and chaste because Allah had decided from the very beginning to keep him thus. How could it then be possible that after Allah's security there should be found anything to the contrary in him?

It has been said that Yusuf saw his father in a vision forbidding him; an angel presenting himself and forbidding him; to influence him, Potiphar's wife throwing a veil over the idol kept in the house, Superior to all such and other reasons advanced is that given by the Qur'an, true faith in Allah; and, next, gratitude to the man who had virtually freed him and kept him in his house with great regard and honour. Potiphar had told her the very first day, *treat him with honour.*" and Yusuf admitted in later days, *"he gave me honour"* Yusuf could not possibly dishonour such a benefactor.

Now when Yusuf ran to the door she chased him; the door somehow opened and, surprisingly, there stood Potiphar and a cousin-brother of the woman. Her love, it seems, was not strong enough, she pretended anger, and, instead of speaking the truth, blurted out, "What can be the punishment for him who intends evil to your family?"

Yusuf defended himself, repudiating her accusation. He said that she herself intended the evil act, but he persistently refused to yield, and was actually running away from her, and she chased him, when, unexpectedly, she came face to face with her husband and cousin and she rigged up the lie.

Her cousin was smart and fair-minded and said that the man's garment should be seen. If it was torn in front, then the woman was speaking the truth and if torn at the back, then he was speaking the truth.

Yusuf's garment was inspected and found to be torn at the back. Potiphar understood the truth but for his and the family's honour wished to silence the matter there and then, He turned to Yusuf and said, "You are speaking the truth, but let the matter drop here." And as for you woman, this is your viciousness and wile; the wile of you women is very great. You have committed this offence, apologize to him for it and ask pray Allah to forgive you.

قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٢٥)
 قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدْتَنِي عَنْ نَفْسِي وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَ
 قَمِيصُهُ قُدًّا مِنْ قَبْلِ فَصَدَقْتَ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَذِبِينَ (٢٦) وَإِنْ كَانَ
 قَمِيصُهُ قُدًّا مِنْ دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبْتَ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ (٢٧) فَلَمَّا رَأَى قَمِيصَهُ
 قُدًّا مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ (٢٨) يُوسُفُ
 أَعْرَضَ عَنْ هَذَا وَاسْتَغْفِرَ لِذَنْبِكُ إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ (٢٩)

(يوسف ١٢ آیت ٢٥-٢٩)

She said: What shall be His reward who wisheth evil to thy folk, save prison or a painful doom? Yusuf said, She it was who asked of me an evil act. And a witness of her own folk testified, If his shirt is torn from before then she speaketh the truth and he is of the liars, And if his shirt is torn from behind, then she hath lied and he is of the truthful. So when he saw his shirt torn from behind; he said, Lo! this is of the guile of you women! Lo! the guile of you is very great! O Yusuf! Turn away from this., and thou (O woman) ask forgiveness for thy sin. Lo! Thou art of the sinful.

(Yusuf; 25-29)

Although to save himself from disgrace, Potiphar had tried to hush up the matter, it could not remain hidden for long and even the ladies of the royal

palace came to hear of it. How shameless was the wife of the Captain of the guard that she had fallen for her slave; so highly placed a woman and seeking an affair with a slave!

Potiphar's wife found the taunt very hard to bear and she thought of avenging herself on the gossipers, not just ordinary revenge but one that should subject them to similar taunting.

One day she invited the ladies of the palace and of the nobility to a party. When they were sitting around the table and eating, knives in their hands to carve the meats and other dishes, she ordered Yusuf to come where the feast was on. As soon as he appeared, the guests, all women, were agape at his beauty and forgetting themselves ran the knife over their hands, instead of the foods, exclaiming, "Who sthis is a human being? This is an image of light, an angel"!

Potiphar's wife, delighted at the success of her plan, openly confessed, "This is the slave on whose account you have been taunting me and gossiping about me. Now see your own condition. Tell me is my love for him justified or not!

وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ () فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ وَأَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَكَأً وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا وَقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ () قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ ()
(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٢٠-٣٢)

And women in the city said, the ruler's wife is asking of her slave-boy an ill deed. Indeed, he has smitten her to the heart with love. We behold her in plain aberration. And when she heard of their sly talk, she sent for them and prepared for them a cushioned couch: (to lie on at the feast), and gave to every one of them a knife, and said (to Yusuf): Come out unto them. And when they saw him, they exalted him and cut their hands exclaiming. Allah blameless! This is not a human being! This is some gracious angel! She said: This is he on whose account ye blamed me" (Yusuf: 30-32)

Potiphar's wife also confessed that she did try to induce his heart to herself but did not succeed, But she was determined, she added, that he would have to

yield, otherwise he would be sent to prison and be dis-honoured. When Yusuf heard this and noticed the sly looks of the other women, he sought refuge in Allah and prayed that he preferred being in prison to what these women were trying to entice him to. If he continued. Allah did not help him and against their wiles, he might incline to them, and behave foolishly.

Yusuf's prayer was accepted by the Almighty One. The women's stratagems were made vain, and ultimate success attended Yusuf.

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ ۖ وَالْأَلَّا تَصْرَفُ عَنِّي
كَيْدَهُنَّ أَضْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُن مِّنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ (۝) فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ
فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ (۝)

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٣٣-٣٤)

He said, O my Lord! Prison is more dear unto me than that unto which they urge me, and if Thou fend not off their wiles from me I shall incline unto them and become of the foolish So his Lord heard his prayer and fended off their wiles from him. Lo! He is Hearer, Knower! (Yusuf- 33-34)

Commentators usually interpret the words, *qatta-ana aidi-hunna*, "the women cut their hands", to mean that the women were so bewitched by Yusuf's beauty that they lost their presence of mind and instead, of cutting the food before them, ran the knives over their hands.

But some commentators of today disagree. They say, that this too was pretence to make Yusuf incline to them by showing him that they were so bewitched by his beauty that they lost their senses on seeing him and cut their hands. In support of their contention, they quote the words, *illa tasrafo anni kayda-hunna*. That is, Yusuf described the cutting of their hands as a deliberate wile. But if this happened in an unconscious state of mind, they were innocent, and the word *kayd*, 'wile', could hardly be applied to what they did. Moreover, Yusuf used the same word *kayd* when Pharaoh ordered that he be brought out from the prison. Yusuf said to the man who brought Pharaoh's message to him:

فَسئَلُهُ مَا نَالُ النَّسُوءِ الَّتِي قَطَعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ ۖ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيمٌ (۝)

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٥٠)

Return to thy Lord and ask him what was the case of the women who cut their hands. Lo! My Lord knoweth their guile.

Potiphar being convinced about Yusuf's innocence and truth, did not want him to be put to any kind of pain or dishonour. On the other side, his wife continued to be infatuated but all her pleadings, threats and coaxing went futile. Yet to save his wife from disgrace and notoriety decided to have him imprisoned for a time, until the people forgot the incident and put an end to their gossip.

With reference to this, Shah Abdul Qadir Mohaddis of Delhi says that had Yusuf, at the time he prayed Allah that he be saved from the wiles of the women, also prayed that he be saved from prison, instead of saying that he preferred prison; he would not have been imprisoned. His having said that he "preferred prison", practically invited imprisonment and had it written in his fate.

In support of this, another commentator quotes a Tradition that a man used to pray Allah that () *اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الصَّبْرَ* he be endowed the gift of patience. The Prophet ﷺ advised the man, "Why do you ask for suffering; ask for safety and welfare."

However, although we hardly dare comment on the ironical tone of the two respected commentators referred to, we hold that Yusuf's words were

للسَّجْنِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ pertinent, expressive of his nearness to the Divine Being, acceptance and submission and becoming the great prophet that he was.

The words Yusuf used were not an invitation to imprisonment or suffering, but a genuine expression of truth in the situation he actually was. He did not even address Potiphar's wife or the other women yet made it plain to them by his prayer that their persuasion, threats and flattery and ways of seduction would never succeed against his determination to remain chaste and Allah-fearing, even though he should be thrown into prison.

رَبِّ السَّجْنِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ ٤

This prayer has nothing in common with that in the Tradition quoted above. There no object of trial or suffering is present yet the man is asking for patience; here the object of trial is present and the prayer is one for immediate help against an immediate trial. He is being threatened with pain and suffering. Would it have been enough for a prophet to pray for being rescued from a wile woman or women? At such a delicate moment, how else could the word of truth be vindicated as well as taught, life respectably resolved, fearlessness in the face of falsehood asserted, dignity of discrimination between truth and untruth demonstrated?

Yusuf in the Prison:

However, Yusuf was sent to prison, and an innocent was made to look guilty, a sinless one sinful, in order to protect a woman from calumny so that none may call the criminal a criminal.

It is written in the Bible that Yusuf's wisdom and virtues could not remain hidden even in prison.

As the Genesis tells us:

“The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand, because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.” (Ch. 39-23)

The Qur'an supports this. Considering the conditions prevailing in the prisons of those times, the free coming and going of fellow prisoners to see Yusuf and the respect shown to him, reflect that his goodness and many virtues were well-known throughout the dungeon.

Preaching:

Incidentally, two men, a wine-bearer of the royal palace and the other, the steward of the royal kitchen were also imprisoned here. One day they came to Yusuf and one of them said that he had seen in a dream that he was pressing vine, and the other said, that he too had seen a dream, that he was carrying on his head a basket of loaves of bread and birds were flying down and eating of them. The men wanted to know the interpretation of their dreams.

Yusuf being a descendant of illustrious prophets and himself chosen by Allah as a prophet looked upon preaching the word of truth as his life's objective. He took the opportunity and speaking with gentleness, said, that among the things Allah had taught him was the interpretation of dreams, and that he would tell them the meaning of their dreams before they had the meal of the day. For the moment, he would like to say that he had not accepted the ways of those who did not have faith in Allah; and denied the Hereafter; that he followed the religion of his fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who did not ascribe partners to Allah; that this was Allah's favour to them, but most people did not thank Allah for this favour

“Now friends!”, as he addressed them, they should reflect whether worshipping many gods was better or One Who was powerful over all things. The reality of whatever they worshipped was no more than mere names invented by their forefathers. Allah had not given any warrant for it. Governance belonged only to Allah and his command was that none should be worshipped save Him alone, this was the straight path, but most people did not appreciate this.

The Qur'an:

يَصَاحِبِي السَّجْنِ ءَأَرْبَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ () مَا
تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ ؕ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا آيَةَ ذَلِكَ الدِّينِ
الْقَيِّمِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ()

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٤٠-٣٩)

O my two fellow-prisoners! Are diverse lords better or Allah the One, the Almighty? Those whom you worship besides him are but names which ye have named, ye and your fathers Allah hath revealed no sanction for them The decision rests with Allah only. Who hath commanded you that you worship none save Him. This is the right religion, but most men know not. (Yusuf --39-40)

After these words of supreme guidance, Yusuf gave the men the interpretation of their dreams. Of the two, the one who saw that he was pressing vine, would be set free and return to the palace to press out wine for his lord; and he who saw birds eating of the bread he carried in a basket on his head would be executed and birds would peck his head and eat of it. Such was the men's fate which had already been decided.

It is said that the two men had been accused of mixing poison to murder the king and after investigation, the case was proved against the steward who baked the bread.

After telling them the interpretation, Yusuf requested the man who was to be freed that he mention him to the King () *أَذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ* () But when the vine-presser returned to the palace he got so preoccupied with his duties that Satan got the better of him and he forgot the promise he had made to Yusuf, and Yusuf had to linger in the prison for some years.

Some commentaries state that by asking his fellow-prisoner whom he knew could be released to mention him to the king () *أَذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ* () he meant that the king may be informed that an innocent man had been thrown into prison, and from this the commentators argue that although asking fellowmen for assistance is perfectly legitimate, in no negative of worshipping Allah, "some good deeds are not believing pious men who are near ones of Allah". () *حَسْبَاتِ الْأَسْرَارِ سَيِّئَاتِ الْمُفْرَسِرِ* () it was improper for one of Yusuf's calibre that.

side by side of trusting in Allah. he should also depend on any other or temporal means and be a supplicator before a king. Therefore, Allah decided that he should remain in prison for a few years. Satan made the winebearer forget so that he could mention nothing about Yusuf to the king.

Ibn Jarir and Baghvi quote some of the earlier authorities that by the pronoun in () فَانْسَاهُ they should have understood that Satan forgot Yusuf that his asking the royal wine-bearer for the king's help was improper. But Ibn Kathir rejects this comment and proves it to be wrong (Vihis commentary of Yusuf).

It appears that the commentary referred to above is based on the Bible from which we shall soon be quoting.

As opposed to this commentary there are others which hold that the words of the Qur'an mean that Yusuf asked his fellow-prisoner to tell the king that there is some one in prison who preaches the religion of truth, that his religion is different from ours and he gives excellent reasons for all he says.

That, in this connection, the Qur'an mentions only two things, one, invitation to the right religion, and the other the dreams of the two men and their interpretations, () اذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ and nothing besides Yusuf mentioned nothing whatever about him not even hinted at anything. The question of doubt does not arise. He showed no anxiety for coming out of prison. Even when the king ordered his release, he decided to stay and demanded an inquiry first, which he could have done after coming out also. His chastity and innocence could be judged even then.

The sequence of the Verses of the Qur'an also confirms this interpretation.

This part of the story as given in Gnesis is as follows:

"And Yusuf said unto him: This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are days.

"Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head and restore thee unto thy place and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

"But think of me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house.

"For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

(Ch. 40 Verses 12-15)

Pharaoh's Dream

The Pharaohs belonged to the Amalika royal dynasty known as the Hexus. It is said that originally they were shepherds from Arabia. The similarity between Qutbi and Arabic languages are further proof of their Arab origin.¹

The biggest Egyptian god was the sun or Aman Ra and because the king was held to be its incarnation, he was called phara'a. (pharan in Hebrew and phiron in Arabic). Arab historians give the name of the Pharaoh of Yusuf's time as Ayoni.

Yusuf was still in prison when Pharaoh saw a rather disturbing dream that there were seven fat kine and seven lean ones, and the lean ones devoured the fat ones. And there were seven green ears of corn and seven dry and the dry ones devoured the green ears.

The king rose from bed in a worried state of mind, summoned his ministers and narrating his dream commanded them to interpret it. They were greatly perplexed and to hide their incompetence, told the king that this was not a dream at all but merely a rambling of his mind, that they could interpret dreams but not mental ramblings.

Pharaoh was not convinced by their answer, but the cup bearer who had been with Yusuf in prison now recalled him to memory and requested the King that if permission were granted, he would bring him the interpretation. Permitted, he went directly to the prison, narrated the dream and requested its interpretation, for, he said, "You are an embodiment of truth and holiness! And it may be that when I return to those who have sent me, they will appreciate your real worth and calibre,"

And this is Yusuf's greatness. He neither rebukes the cup bearer for having forgotten his promise for so long, nor denies him his knowledge of things, nor wished that if they who threw him into prison were ruined by not being forewarned of what the dream foreboded, so much the better for them. Instead, he interpreted the dream forthwith and also told the man how the coming bad times could be averted.

For the next seven years, he advised, plough the land cultivate rich harvests, for, this will be a time of abundance but store the surplus above your needs leaving the corn in its ears, for, these years will be followed by seven years of scarcity and famine, which will deplete what is stored up. After this will come

¹ Tarjuman ul Qur'an Vol.2 p. 366.

a time of prosperity again. There will be abundant rains, the fields will blossom, and oil will be pressed

قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأْبًا فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلَّا
 قَلِيلًا مِّمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ () ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعَ شِدَادٍ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا
 قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّا تَحْصِنُونَ () ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ
 فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعْصِرُونَ ()

Pharaoh was delighted when the cup bearer brought him the interpretation of his dream, which he found convincing. He appreciated that the interpreter must be some one of great wisdom and godliness, and became impatient to meet him. He ordered that Yusuf be brought to him forthwith.

When the messenger arrived with the good news of his release. Yusuf refused to leave the prison and told him to return to the king and ask him to inquire into the facts concerning the women who cut their hands on seeing him. This matter must be cleared first before he would deign to step out. for, "Allah is best aware of women's craftiness".

Yusuf, had been in jail for some years. and it might be expected that when the royal messenger brought him the happy news, he should have stepped out of the dungeon at once with joy. But he did not and demanded an inquiry into his innocence. This was because he was a scion of great prophets and was himself a prophet. His sense of self-respect and modesty demanded that he should not be under an obligation to the king for his release, and be looked upon as though it was an act of mercy, but that it was due to his innocence. Besides, otherwise there would always remain some doubt about it; and not only would his self-respect be wounded but his prophetic mission his life-purpose would also be damaged. Now was the opportune time for clearing up the mess? The truth must be made manifest, clear and unambiguous.

Bukhari and Muslim have recorded that the comment of our Prophet ﷺ on this subject was:

لَوْلَبِثْتُ فِي السِّجْنِ مَا لَبِثَ يُوسُفُ لَأَجَبْتُ الدَّاعِيَ (الحديث)

"Had I been in prison so long as Yusuf had been, I would have accepted my release order at once."

It should also be noted that although Potiphar's wife had set the mischief afoot, Yusuf mentioned nothing about her but referred directly to some women who had cut their hands. These women were involved in the case because

every one of them had fallen for him and desired to seduce him, and being disappointed, abetted their hostess in her decision to have him sent to prison. The other reason was that Yusuf appreciated the fact that Potiphar had treated him honourably, and any adverse reference to his wife would reflect adversely on him.

Pharaoh summoned the women and demanded the truth of the story. They answered in one voice:

قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوءٍ (يوسف ١٢ آيت ٥١)
"By Allah! We found no evil in him!"

Potiphar's wife was there. She was no longer raw in her love but quite mature, beyond any fear of disgrace, and seeing that it was Yusuf's wish that the truth should be spoken, quite helplessly confessed:

أَلَسَ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ أَنَا رَاوِدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

Lo! The truth is out! Lo! It was I who tried to seduce him but he proved continent. He is of the truthful.

ذَلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَخُنْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي كَيْدَ الْخَائِنِينَ
 وَمَا أَبْرَأُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي
 غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (يوسف ١٢ آيت ٥٢، ٥٣)

This that he may know that I betrayed him not in secret, and that surely Allah guideth not the snare of the betrayers. I do not exculpate myself. Lo! the (human) soul enjoineeth unto evil, save that whereon my Lord hath mercy. Lo! My Lord is Forgiving, Merciful.

We have translated this Verse according to the commentary by Ibn Hayyan Undlasi. Other commentators differ.

Hafiz Ibn Teemya and his pupil Hafiz Imad ud Deen b. Kathir translate it as follows:

This I say in order that he (Potiphar/Yusuf?) may come to know that I did not betray him behind his back, (more what he already knew) and indeed Allah does not make the guile of the crafty prosper. (Had I betrayed any more, Allah would have exposed it). I do not exculpate myself. The human soul enjoineeth unto evil except that Allah has mercy on him. Indeed my Lord is forgiving, Merciful.

In both these versions the words spoken are held to be those of Potiphar's wife. but the majority of commentators, including Ibn Teemya, hold them to be Yusuf's, translating,

(Then Yusuf said, I asked for) this that he (my lord) may know that I betrayed him not in secret and that surely Allah guideth not the snare of the betrayers. I do not exculpate myself. Lo! the human soul enjoineeth unto evil, save that whereon my Lord hath mercy. Lo! my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful.

As for the words *ma abri nafsi*, the latter commentators explain that because Yusuf had given such formidable evidence of the continence of his soul, the sense of modesty of so illustrious a prophet demanded that he do not presume that it was due to his own strength of character and piety man's own self tempts him to great evil but that it was Allah's bestowal of His mercy on him. His mercy is quite sufficient for the prophets.

Now Yusuf's chastity, truthfulness and piety were vindicated by those very tongues which had accused him once and the real criminal herself confessed in the presence of the king that Yusuf was innocent and free of all manner of filth and impurities.

Imam Razi holds that Yusuf was a true Prophet of Allah and, therefore, he was free of all manner of defilement and no moment of his life was tainted with the least pollution. That is why Allah had him acquitted by those very tongues which had levelled accusations against him.

الْفَضْلُ مَا شِهِدَتْ بِهِ الْأَعْدَاءُ.

Who were those persons accusing or acquitting him? Potiphar's wife, her women guests and her cousin, each one of them is directly involved in the case under investigation.

يُوسُفُ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ هَذَا

Of the three, her cousin is the first to come forward, and deliver his intelligent verdict regarding the tearing of Yusuf's raiment. He frees Yusuf of any guilt and confirms his sanctity. Then follows Potiphar himself and holds his wife guilty and clears Yusuf of the least suspicion. He apologises to Yusuf and for the sake of his family honour requests him to end the matter there and then.

Then the guests of Potiphar's wife. When the king, in full court, asks them about Yusuf, they answer,

حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوءٍ

“We know nothing of evil about him” thus confirming his chastity and being sinless. Although none of these witnesses was a relative to Yusuf himself, but of those belonging to an alien country, it might yet be suspected that Yusuf might have stumbled, a little, if not much, Allah the Glorious, to obviate even such small doubt from his chaste and holy prophet made the real criminal herself announce in full court:

الَّذِينَ حَصَّحَصَّ الْحَقُّ أَنَا رَاوِدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ
ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٥٤)

“Now the truth is out: It was I who tried to seduce him. He is surely of the truthful!” (Verse 51)

Yusuf's esteem rose in Pharaoh's heart as soon as he was convinced of the true facts. The cup bearer's faith and mention of Yusuf's wisdom, the intuitively convincing interpretation of his dream and now the revelation of Yusuf's countenance made Pharaoh impatient to see him and further profit from him. He ordered:

أَتُونِي بِهِ أَسْتَخْلِصَ لِنَفْسِي (يوسف ١٢ آيت ٥٤)

Bring him unto me that I may attach him to my person etc.

Yusuf came from the dungeon to the royal palace where the king welcomed him, conversation followed leaving Pharaoh astonished that one so trustworthy, so upright and true to his principles was also full of wisdom, and told him,

إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ أَمِينٌ (يوسف ١٢ آيت ٥٤)

“And when had talked with him, he said. Lo! thou art today in our presence established and trusted.”

Pharaoh asked him for his advice about what he should do in respect of the famine that will come, as foreboded in his dream. Yusuf told him.

قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٥٥)

"Set me over the storehouses of the land. Lo! I am a skilled custodian.
(Verse 55.)

Pharaoh accepted this counsel and appointed Yusuf to the administration of all his country and had the keys of the treasuries delivered to him.

The Genesis records:

"And Pharaoh said unto Yusuf, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Yusuf's hand and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had, and they carried before him. Bow the knee, and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Yusuf, I am Pharaoh and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt," (Ch. 41 verses 41-44)

Such is the workings of the Glorious One on high! He whom the people looked as a desert dweller, a nomad and was also a slave. He first had him appointed as the head of the house of a highly placed officer; and when He had him released from prison, made him overlord of the kingdom of Egypt and administrator over all the people of the land!, thus elevating him to a position that was beyond human imagination and mundane logic.

If this is not the miraculous work of the Almighty One, what is it? He who was but a shepherd boy in Canaan is today the head, guiding the state affairs of the most civilized nation of the time. True, he who is accepted by the One on High, for him all tribulations are as nothing!

On having Yusuf established in Potiphar's house, Allah had said, We bestowed on him *tamkin fil ard*, and when the end of that beginning took shape, He said again,

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُونَ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ نُصِيبُ
بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ وَلَا جَزَاءُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ
(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٥٦ , ٥٧)

Thus gave We power to Yusuf in the land' He was the owner of it where he pleased. We reach with our mercy whom We will. We lose not the reward of the good. And the reward of the Hereafter is better for those who believe and ward off evil.

The words *tamkin fil ard* are used in two places for Yusuf in the Qur'an. How well Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has said in his Tarjuman ul Qur'an:

“There are two revolutionary points of note in Yusuf’s life in Egypt”, he writes:”

One when he was sold as a slave and then became so honourable in Potiphar’s eyes that he became administrator of the region; and, second, when he came out of prison and immediately on coming out, arrived where he was seen shining on the virtual throne of authority.

“Thus when the episode was completed as far as the first revolution, attention was drawn (in Verse 21) to the miraculous strategy of Allah’s wisdom.

كَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا يُوْسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ

And now when the second revolution commenced, He said in the same tone (in Verse 56)

كَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا يُوْسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ

Here because the second phase of the episode was completed, it was said,

لَا نُضِيعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِ

This was because Our law is that a good deed shall never be vain, it must blossom forth a fruit.”

(Tarjuman ul Qur’an Vol 2 p.235)

We have stated at the beginning of the narrative that the Surah was revealed in consequence of the idolater’s of Makkah having asked the Prophet ﷺ to tell them how the descendants of Abraham came to Egypt.

Shah Abdul Qadir says, This was the reply to their question. Just as Yusuf’s brothers had thrown him out far from home so that he might be disgraced but Allah gave him honour and authority over a country, the same happened to our Prophet ﷺ!”

Immediately on his appointment to overall authority Yusuf began taking steps that were to be of benefit to the country in the next fourteen years so that the people may not have to starve and worry when bad times came. The Qu`an leaves out the unnecessary parts of the narrative, but the Genesis gives the details:

“And Yusuf was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Yusuf went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; the food of the field, which was round about every city laid up in the same.

And Yusuf gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much until he left numbering; for it was without number (46-49)

And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt was ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come according as Yusuf had said, and the dearth was in all lands but in Egypt there was bread.

And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread, and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians: Go unto Yusuf, what he said to you do.

And the famine was over all the face of the earth. And Yusuf opened all the storehouses and sold unto the Egyptians. And the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

And all countries came into Egypt to Yusuf for to buy corn because that the famine was so sore in all lands (53-57)

“Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do you look one upon another?”

And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt, get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live, and not die.”

(Ch. 42 verses 1-2)

The famine was not confined to Egypt but extended over several neighbouring countries as well, including Canaan where Jacob lived with his family. When conditions became unbearable, he told his sons to go to Egypt and buy corn, for he had heard that corn was stored up there.

The sons did as they were told, and this caravan of brothers set off to get food from the very brother whom, according to their imagination, they had made a common, unknown slave. Little did this caravan of Yusuf-vendors know that yesterday's slave was today's lord of all Egypt, and it was he that they had to supplicate to.

Arriving in Egypt, they were ushered into Yusuf's court, and Yusuf recognized them immediately but they could not recognize him. There was little physical change in them and he was familiar with their way of talking and gestures, but when they saw him last, he was but a child and today he was a grown-up mature adult of forty. Besides, it was beyond their imagination that Yusuf could occupy such a high status.

وَجَاءَ إِخْوَةُ يُوسُفَ فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٥٨)

"And Yusuf's bretheren came and presented themselves before him, and he knew them but they knew him not."

The Genesis tells us that the brothers were accused of spying and thus they had the opportunity of talking face to face with Yusuf. He asked them about the welfare of their father and their youngest brother whom they had left behind. Finally, he gave them all the corn they asked for and, at the same time, told them that since on account of the great famine they would have to be coming again, he would not give them any corn unless they brought their youngest brother with them.

Benjamin whom, as they told him, their father would not allow to accompany them because his full-brother had disappeared.

وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَّازِهِمْ قَالَ ائْتُونِي بِأَخٍ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ أَبِيكُمْ أَلَا تَرَوْنَ
أَنِّي أَوْفِ الْكَيْلَ وَأَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ فَإِن لَّمْ تَأْتُونِي بِهِ فَلَا كَيْلَ لَكُمْ
عِنْدِي وَلَا تَقْرَبُونِ

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٥٩ , ٦٠)

And when he provided them with their provision bring unto me a brother of yours from your father. See ye not that I fill up the measure and I am the best of hosts. And if ye bring him not unto me, then there shall be no measure for you with me nor shall ye draw near. (59-60)

They told him that they would do their best to convince their father and pursued him to let Benjamin to go with them.

Then when they started off on the return journey, Yusuf ordered the servants quietly to put the money they had paid for the corn back in their sacks, so that opening the sacks on arriving home, and finding their money returned to them, they might come back again.

On arrival in Canaan, the sons told their father all that had taken place, and also that the Egyptian administrator had warned them that in future no corn would be sold to them, nor would they be allowed to come in his presence unless Benjamin accompanied them. So when they go he should let Benjamin go with them, They would look after him and protect him to their very best.

Jacob said that he would never let Benjamin go with them, for, he had, on their undeallowed Yusuf to go out with them but never saw him again. What

was their protection worth? Allah was the best of protectors and none was there more merciful than Him!

قَالَ هَلْ أَمْنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا كَمَا أَمِنْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَخِيهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖ فَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ
حَفِظًا وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيمِينَ ۖ (٦٤)

He said: Can I entrust him to you save as I entrusted his brother to you aforetime? Allah is better at guarding, and He is the Most Merciful of those Who show mercy. (64)

Now after this brief conversation when the brothers opened their sacks they found to their surprise that their money had been returned to them. They told their father about this and said that he should allow them to go to Egypt again and take Benjamin with them, so that they might obtain one more camel-load of corn.

The Genesis (in Ch. 43 verse 35) tells us that Jacob and his sons were frightened when they saw that the price of the corn had been returned. They wondered if some new calamity was to overtake them. But the sequence of events and Yusuf's treatment of his brothers, similar in both the Genesis and the Qur'an, indicates that the Qur'an's version is correct. Yusuf's brothers had paid the price of the corn with their own hands, and it was only after this exchange that they had been allowed to leave. Then when they found that the money was returned, placed in every sack, they assumed that just as the administrator had treated them with honour, he had also returned them their money, and so as to save them from any feeling of obligation, made no mention of it.

Jacob, however, was firm and said that he would not permit Benjamin to go with them unless they swore in the name of Allah that they would bring him back safe and sound unless compelled by some adverse happening. Accordingly, they took an oath as demanded and convinced their father in every possible way. Jacob said that this was the outward end of the matter; human oaths and undertaking were as nothing. Everything should be left to Allah and His protection!

قَالَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ

And when they gave him their undertaking, he said, Allah is the Warden over what we say. (66)

When the time came for Yusuf's brothers to set off for Egypt on their second journey, and Benjamin with them, their father advised that they should not all enter the city by one gate but by separate gates; that they should not feel vain

over their smartness, because he could not save them from what might overtake them by Allah's command. Obedience is only for Allah; that he trusts only in Allah and all who have to trust should trust in Him. Therefore, what he, their father, advises was only as a precaution. Precaution was not contrary to trusting in Allah and Godliness.

The general commentary of the ulema on this advice is that because Yusuf had treated the brothers on their first visit with conspicuous honour, and now that their caravan was coming on Yusuf's invitation, it might be that the Egyptians get envious and so become a source of trouble for them.

Other commentators hold that that the Genesis has shown that the brothers on their first visit had been accused of spying. Though Yusuf himself might not have levelled this accusation, the people definitely had. As Jacob had been told the whole story of that first journey, he feared that if they entered the city as a group with pomp and show, they might be arrested reaching their host.

The Qur'an draws our attention to Jacob being blessed with wisdom and vision, endowed on him by Allah, he spoke words that came to his mind, otherwise, in spite of obeying their father's advice, whatever was to take place by Allah's discernment would take place. No precaution would be of any avail.

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُمْ أَبُوهُمْ مَا كَانَ يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا حَاجَةٌ فِي نَفْسِ يَعْقُوبَ قَصَّهَا وَإِنَّهُ لَذُو عِلْمٍ لَمَا
عَلَّمْنَاهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (يوسف ١٢ آيت ٦٨)

And when they entered in the manner which their father had enjoined, it would have not availed them as against Allah. It was but a need of Jacob's soul which he thus satisfied. And lo! he was a lord of knowledge because We had taught him, but most of mankind know not (68)

The idea is that what Jacob did was what he should have done as his knowledge demanded, because knowledge was the gift of Allah to him. It is not necessary that precautionary measures should succeed everywhere. If Allah wills otherwise, things are bound to happen according as He wills and not as planned by human beings. The coming events concerning Benjamin are a glaring example. Benjamin was kept back as Allah willed and this proved ultimately beneficial for all of Jacob's family.

During their journey to Egypt, Yusuf's half-brothers kept harassing Benjamin. Sometimes they would taunt him over their father's excessive love for him, at

others; give free expression to their jealousy that Egypt's lord had specifically invited him. Benjamin tolerated it all in silence.

At last, when they arrived at their destination, Yusuf called Benjamin aside and told him that he was their lost brother Yusuf, and consoled him that none would be able now to trouble him in any way.

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ أَوَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَخَاهُ قَالَ إِنِّي أَنَا أَخُوكَ فَلَا
تَبْتَسِرْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ
(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٦٩)

And when they went in before Yusuf, he took his brother unto himself, saying, Lo! I, even I, am thy brother, therefore sorrow not for what they did. (69)

The Genesis tells us that Yusuf welcomed his brothers with great honour and had them put up in the royal guest house. After a few days when they started off on the return journey Yusuf ordered the servants to load their camels with as much corn as they could carry. He wanted to keep his brother Benjamin back, but according to the Egyptian law which forbade detaining any foreigner, he could not do as he so ardently desired. He therefore thought out a way.

The caravan of the eleven brothers had not traveled far when some of Yusuf's servants came running after, shouting, "Stop, you are thieves"! They said, "We checked the royal crockery and found a silver wine-cup missing, and since no one else had arrived to stay there, the suspicion was that you must have stolen it. And their master has promised a camel-load-of corn to the man who catches the thief".

The brothers strongly denied the accusation, saying, "You know very well that we did not come here to rob and do mischief. We have been here before to buy corn and no such thing happened. Robbing is not our habit.

"If we inspect your luggage, and find the silver cup, what should be your punishment?" the servants asked:

"The thief himself is his own punishment. This is our law at home."

The men then started searching the luggage of the Canaanites, beginning with the eldest brother and lastly Benjamin's from whose sack they produced the silver cup. The caravan was made to return and the case was submitted to Yusuf.

Yusuf was very happy in his heart of heart and thanked Allah for having contrived things this way, for, he himself had placed the silver cup as a memento in Benjamin's sack.

On his side Benjamin was perfectly satisfied with the turn of events. The half-brothers could not restrain themselves and with malicious courage told a white lie that it was "not surprising that Benjamin had stolen for his elder brother (Yusuf) too had stolen once!"

Yusuf took these words with patient silence, and said in his heart, "Your worst place can be that you make this false accusation! Allah best knows what you say."

Some commentators hold that Yusuf spoke the words to his half-brothers putting them to shame: "You just said that you were nowhere near stealing and robbing, and now you are accusing your lost brother of the crime, which means that your whole family is one of thieves!"

In any case, they were greatly embarrassed, and remembering the oath they had taken before their father. Pleaded with Yusuf that since their father was very old and still distressed at the loss of one son, he would be tormented at missing another, the first one's full-brother, of whom he was specially . Therefore, they humbly pray that as a measure of compassion, one of them may be detained for punishment in place of Benjamin who may be set free.

Yusuf said he could not possibly do so, for the law of the land did not permit such a thing. "I take refuge in Allah! How can this be possible. We would be great wrong doers, if we did such a thing!"

"Disappointed, they turned aside and began consulting one another. The eldest of them said that after the promise they had made to their father, and seeing what they did with Yusuf, he would not go home to face him again, unless his father permitted him to come home or Allah find some way and that the rest of them should go back and tell their father that Benjamin had committed a theft, and was, therefore, held back. this was the truth, which could be verified from the people of Egypt as well as the caravan which they accompanied. "We cannot foretell the future and we had no idea that Benjamin would commit such a deed,"

On returning home, they told Jacob all that occurred.

فَقُولُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ ۗ

(Tell your father) Your son has committed a theft.

This shows how callous Yusuf's half-brothers were. Even at such a time they did not spare their aging father from taunt and irony of the implication that "your favourite son has committed such a disgraceful crime", instead of saying, some such words as "our brother made a slip of an error."

Jacob already had experience of their truthfulness and said, "That cannot be. Benjamin cannot do such a thing. You have made up this story. I can do nothing but have patience. It is not beyond Allah's power to bring the two lost ones back to me. He is the Wise, the Knowing One." And with these words Jacob turned his face away from them, exclaiming, "Alas! my grief for Yusuf!" And his eyes had turned white because of weeping and the grief he was suppressing.

"You will go on melting away in your sorrow for Yusuf," the sons said, "or will die in this way!" Jacob answered that he was not complaining to them about anything nor putting them to any trouble.

إِنَّمَا أَشْكُوا بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٨٦)

I submit my grief only to Allah! I know from Allah what you know not."

The commentary we have given in connection with the royal wine-cup is different from the other commentaries. Latter day scholars class such commentaries as *qaul e shaz*, but it is the best in this connection. The other commentaries state that it was

جَعَلَ السَّقَايَةَ فِي رَحْلِ أَخِيهِ (يوسف ١٢ آيت ٧٠)

"Yusuf who placed the royal-cup in his brother's sack".

The reason why Yusuf did this, the commentators say, was that Egypt's law forbade the detention of any foreigner and so Yusuf contrived to have his brother accused of theft, which would justify holding Benjamin back. They also hold that it was Yusuf who shouted after him.

Then, when Yusuf is accused of a lie, these commentators vindicate his innocence by stating that it was an act of *toriah* or 'emergency lie'. There is nothing in the Qur'an to give the slightest suspicion that Yusuf ever spoke a lie, or obliged him to have recourse to a *toriah*.

There are occasions when *toriah* is justified and even commendable. But here we are speaking not of ordinary people but of a prophet of Allah, Prophets transcend technical comment. The words and style of the Qur'an do not compel such an implication nor does any Tradition support it. Therefore, there is no reason why a meaning should be ascribed that obliges a prophet to have recourse to a *toriah* for preserving his innocence

All that the Qur'an mentions is that Yusuf placed the royal silver cup in his brother's sack. After these words, there is no mention of Yusuf until later on. The conversation is between the ten caravan-brothers and the servants.

ثُمَّ أَذِنَ مُؤَدِّنُ أَيَّتِهَا الْعَيْرُ إِنَّكُمْ لَسَارِقُونَ قَالُوا وَأَقْبَلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ مَاذَا تَفْقِدُونَ () قَالُوا نَفَقِدُ صُوعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَاءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ بَعِيرٍ وَأَنَا بِهِ زَعِيمٌ () قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سَارِقِينَ قَالُوا فَمَا جَزَاؤُهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَذِبِينَ () قَالُوا جَزَاؤُهُ مَنْ وَجِدَ فِي رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهُ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ

Then a crier cried: O camel riders! You are surely thieves! They cried, coming toward them, what is it you have lost? They said, we have lost the king's cup, and he who bringeth it shall have a camelload, and I (said Yusuf) am answerable for it. They said: By Allah! well ye know we came not to do evil in the land, and are no thieves. They said: And what shall be the penalty for it, if ye prove liars. They said the penalty for it! He in whose bag (the cup) is found, he is the penalty for it. Thus we requite the wrongdoers. (70--75)

It was after this talk that the matter was submitted before Yusuf. A search was made and the royal cup was found in Benjamin's saddle-bag.

فَبَدَأَ بِأَوْعِيَّتِهِمْ قَبْلَ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ ۗ

Then he began the search with their bags before his brother's bag, then he produced it from his brother's bag. (Verse 76)

Allah asserts His blessing that by His contrivance, He accomplished for Yusuf what Yusuf was so desirous about.

كَذَلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوسُفَ مَا كَانَ لِيَأْخُذَ أَخَاهُ فِي دِينِ الْمَلِكِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۗ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَاءُ ۗ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ ۗ

Thus We did contrive for Yusuf. He could not have taken his brother according to the king's law unless Allah willed We raise by grades (of mercy) whom We will. and over every Lord of knowledge there is another more knowing."

(Verse 76)

Why should an interpretation not be made which does not necessitate an accusation of *toriah* against Yusuf, and why should a meaning not be taken which does not oblige one to go in for explanation and argument?

However, Jacob advised his sons to go once again to Egypt and do their best to find Yusuf and Benjamin, and not to despair of Allah's mercy, for, to despair of Allah's mercy becomes only the infidels.

يَبْنِيَّ اذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ وَآخِيهِ وَلَا تَأْيِسُوا مِنْ رُوحِ اللَّهِ
إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْيِسُ مِنْ رُوحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

"Go, O my sons and ascertain concerning Yusuf and his brother, and despair not of the Spirit of Allah. Lo! None despaireth of the Spirit of Allah save disbelieving folk."

(Verse 87)

Together with Benjamin's name, Jacob also mentions Yusuf, because Allah wished to indicate to him that in this episode of Benjamin, the secret of Yusuf's recovery is hidden. That is why, Jacob's words are:

أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٩٦)

Did I not tell you that I know from Allah what ye know not.

Partly out of obedience to their father and partly because of the terrible famine, Yusuf's brothers set off for Egypt for the third time.

Arriving at their destination, they submitted before Yusuf that they were in the pangs of starvation at home, and this time they had brought very little money with them; that now the transaction could not be a proper one, for, they would not be able to pay the full price; yet what they asked for was the full measure which might be given as a matter of obligation to those who were needy, for Allah requites well those who oblige and are charitable!

When Yusuf heard these words, and the distress of his parents, his heart filled with remorse and was deeply moved; he could not control himself, and said:

هَلْ عِلْمُكُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوسُفَ وَآخِيهِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ جَاهِلُونَ

"Know ye what ye did unto Yusuf and his brother in your ignorance?"

(Verse 89)

This unexpected question startled the brothers; they looked at him with penetrating eyes and vaguely recollecting the facial features, blurted out:

قَالُوا ءَإِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ يُوسُفُ

"Art thou indeed Yusuf?"

They were standing in Yusuf's stately court, and the irrelevant mention of Yusuf's name could not but astonish and perplex them. His way of talking and behaviour and facial features seemed to bring home the identity. Out of respect they could not say directly, "So you are Yusuf" but rhetorically,

And Yusuf replied:

أَنَا يُوسُفُ وَهَذَا أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

"Yes, I am Yusuf and this (Benjamin) is my brother. Allah hath shown us favour. Lo! he who wardeth off (evil) and endureth (findeth favour); for Allah loseth not the wages of the kindly." (Verse 90)

Now, his brothers were lost in shame. All that they had done to ruin and get rid of Yusuf flashed before their eyes. He whom they had thrown into a well, had become so exalted, virtual lord of all Egypt!

They could do nothing but hang their heads in shame and confess:

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَتَرْنَا اللَّهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَخَطِيئِينَ

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٩١)

By Allah! Allah hath preferred thee above us; and we were, indeed, wrong-doers!"

When Yusuf saw their humility and self-reproach, he had compassion on them and said;

لَا تَتْرِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

"Have no fear this day! May Allah forgive you, He is the most merciful of those who show mercy." (Verse 92)

In other words: "Whatever was to happen is now past. I will pray to Allah to forgive you; He is full of mercy above us all."

Yusuf told them to go back to Canaan and take his shirt with them and place it on their father's eyes which would recover their sight. What could be greater

felicity for these half-brothers? Once they had come with Yusuf's shirt, stained with false blood, backed with lies and falsehood tormenting their father's heart, and today they are returning to their father with a shirt of the same Yusuf to embalm their father's wounds and soothe his heart!

The conversation ending here, the brothers headed home for Canaan where Jacob under Divine inspiration, said to his folk, "I can feel the fragrance of Yusuf's breath."

They told him that he was in his dotage, and would never forget Yusuf who must now be untraceable without sign or vestige.

But not many weeks passed that the travelers arrived and going directly to their father placed Yusuf's shirt on his face. Jacob's eyes brightened up and he was able to see again. He said, "Did I not tell you that I know from Allah what you do not know?"

فَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَهُ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيرًا قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ
إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Then the bearer of glad tidings came, he laid it on his face and he became a seer once more. He said: Said I not unto you that I know from Allah that which you know not? (96)

These were moments of great embarrassment for these sons of Jacob. Too ashamed of themselves, with bowed heads they implored their father to pray Allah to forgive them. They said that they had been thoroughly exposed and they confess their sin. Jacob answered:

سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

(يوسف ١٢ آيت ٩٨)

"I shall ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Lo! He is the forgiving, the merciful.

Commentators point out that the ten brothers had requested Yusuf to pray Allah for their forgiveness and now made the same request to their father. And while Yusuf prayed Allah at once to forgive them,

يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ

their father merely gave them the hope that he would pray for them

سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ

What the reason for this?

1. They say that since the matter concerned himself, Yusuf disposed of it immediately, while Jacob had to consult Yusuf before he could take the step and so postponed it until then. At the same time, Jacob expressed his own feelings that he wished that Allah would forgive them.
2. Yusuf was young and precipitate and so forgave immediately. But Jacob was mature and cautious; he wanted to test his sons, whether their remorse was momentary or really sincere and deep and, side by side, he did not leave them without hope.

Jacob's Family in Egypt:

Jacob taking his household members left for Egypt. The Genesis describes the connected events in these words:

“And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying Yusuf's bretheren are come; and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.

“And Pharaoh said unto Yusuf, Say unto thy bretheren: This do ye:: lade your animals and go , get you unto the land of Canaan

“And take your father and your households and come unto me; and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the fat of the land.

“Now thou art commanded this do ye; Take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father and come.

“Also regard not your stuff; for the good of the land of Egypt is yours.

“And the children of Israel did so.” *(Ch. 45, verses 16 to 20)*

“And they came into Egypt, Jacob and all his seed with him.

“His sons and sons' sons with him, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

“.....all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were three score and seven.” *(Verses 6,7 and 27)*

As soon as Yusuf was informed that his folk were near the city precincts, he came out to receive them. And they met, and Jacob embraced his long lost son.

Then Yusuf, with words of peace and reverential welcome, brought his father into the city. Ramses was the metropolis of Egypt at that time. It was known as the 'city of celebrations'. With great pomp he seated his father and those with him in the royal carriages and escorted them to the royal palace.

After these preliminaries Yusuf held a durbar in order that the public might be introduced to the new comer and become aware of the reverence due to them. On his instructions, Yusuf's parents (his own mother had passed away long ago) were seated on the royal dias, while the rest of the family sat along with the rest of the people lower down, according to their grades. When all this was orderly completed, Yusuf came out on the dias, and immediately, according to the prevailing imperial custom, everyone fell prostrate⁴ before the dias, and seeing this, Yusuf's brothers also fell prostrate. This reminded Yusuf of his dreams of childhood days

وَقَالَ يَا بَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُءْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَاءَ بِكُمْ مِنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ نَزَغَ الشَّيْطَانُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِمَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ.

“And he placed his parents on the dais and they fell down before him prostrate, and he said, O my father this is the interpretation of my dream of old. My Lord hath made it true and He hath shown me kindness since He took me out of the prison and hath brought you from the desert after Satan had made strife between me and my bretheren. Lo! My Lord is tender unto whom He will. He is the knower, the Wise.

(Yusuf Verse 100)

Wonderul are the doings of Allah! Seeing the end of the marvelous sequence of events, Yusuf glorified Allah.

رَبِّ قَدَاتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَلِيٌّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَالْحَقِيقِي بِالصَّلِحِينَ

O my Lord! Thou hast given me (something) of sovereignty and hast taught me (something) of the interpretation of events Creator of of the heavens and te earth! Thou art my

⁴ Such a custom might have prevailed in the times of the earlier prophets, though it is doubtful. But our Prophet ﷺ definitely forbade prostrating before any one but God.

Protecting friend in the world and the Hereafter. Make me to die submissive (unto thee), and join me to the righteous!
(Verse 101)

The Genesis tells us that after this, Yusuf's entire family settled down in Egypt because Pharaoh told him that he should make them do so. Pharaoh said he would give them the best land in the country and honour them.

Yusuf advised his family folk that when Pharaoh asks them to settle in Egypt and select the place, they should choose such and such part and that since they were habituated to living in the open and grazing cattle and sheep, they preferred life away from the towns. Pharaoh, then, endowed on them the land they had asked for. Thus it was that the children of Israel made Egypt their permanent home.

“And Pharaoh said unto Yusuf, Say unto thy bretheren, This do ye; lade your beasts and, and go, get you into the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households, and come unto me and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and you shall the fat of the land.

Now thou art commanded; this do ye, take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your fater and come.

And regard not your stuff, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.

And the children of Israel did so” (Ch. 45. Verses 17-21)

“And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation?

That ye shall say: thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we and also our fathers; that you may live in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.”

(Genesis 46/ 33-34)

Yusuf's motive was that living at a distance from the Egyptians, his folk would not take to their ways and their religion but would be able to adhere to their own faith and lead their own life of courage, morality and good health.

Death:

Yusuf having spent practically all his life in Egypt died at the age of a hundred and ten years. Before breathing his last he took an oath from his relatives that they would not bury him in Egypt, but when Allah's promise for the return of the children of Israel to Palestine is fulfilled, then his bones may be shifted along with them. Accordingly, Yusuf's body was preserved as a mummy, and, later, when the Israelites under Moses left Egypt, Yusuf's remains too were taken by them and buried in the land of his forefathers. His grave is said to be under a tree in Balata, a village of Nablus

According to the Genesis:

“And Yusuf dwelt in Egypt, he and his father’s house, and Yusuf lived an hundred and ten years.

“And Yusuf saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation, the children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Yusuf’s knees.

“And Yusuf said unto his bretheren, I die and Allah will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

“And Yusuf took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, Allah will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

“So Yusuf died, being an hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.” *(Genesis Ch.50/22- 26)*

“And Moses took the bones of Yusuf with him, for he had straightly sworn the children of Israel, saying, Allah will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones away hence with you.” *(Exodus, Ch. 13/ 19)*

Important Moral Prospects:

This narrative of Yusuf contains in itself many important ethical lessons to ponder over. It is not merely a narration of events but a treasury of moral values discernible from many angles, full of vision and lessons of faith, steadfastness, self-control, patience, gratitude, chastity, honesty, trustworthiness, mercy and compassion, forgiveness, piety, missionary emotion, and love of the Divine, all visible in every detail. Some may specially be mentioned:

If one’s character is good and his environment too is clean, pure and elegant, his life will be distinguished by magnanimity and noble characteristics, honourable and exalted.

Yusuf’s life is an excellent example of this description. He was a scion of such great prophets as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ﷺ, and was nourished and brought up in the cradle of prophethood. In such surroundings, personal goodness and innate attributes shone out, expressing the virtues of patience, chastity, steadfastness, honesty and Divine love, so greatly that seeing the embodiment of them, the human intelligence is lost in wonder!

2. If faith in Allah is firmly established, all one’s difficulties and sufferings are rendered as nothing. This too is prominent in Yusuf’s life.
3. In tribulations, troubles and trials whether in the shape of suffering or of the fascination of wealth or desires of the lower self, in every condition one

should turn to Allah, and pray Him alone to keep one steadfast on the path of truth. Whether on the occasion of the advancements of Potiphar's wife and the other Egyptian women, or the threats of imprisonment, and then following the sufferings in prison, Yusuf turns only to Allah. He never requests Potiphar for consideration, nor makes any supplication to Pharaoh, nor gets interested in the alluring women of Egypt; but beseeches Allah's help on every occasion.

رَبِّ السَّجْنِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ مَعَآذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ
رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ

4. When the love of Allah penetrates the very depths of the heart, it becomes life's sole objective and emotions of preaching Allah's faith run in the very blood of one's veins. In the tribulations of prison life, Yusuf's first words to his fellow-prisoners were:

يَا صَاحِبِي السَّجْنِ ءَ أَرْبَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

"O my fellow prisoners, are diverse lords better or God the One the Almighty-Glorious?"

5. Honesty and trust worthiness are such blessings of Allah that they should be looked upon as the key to the blessings both of this world and the next. Yusuf's becoming respectable in Potiphar's eyes and, later, the virtual lord of all Egypt was due entirely to his honesty and trustworthiness.
6. Self-confidence is among the superior virtues of character. Only those attain to high status in this life or spiritual life after passing through tribulations who are blessed by Allah with this blessing.

Self respect is among the various aspects of self-confidence. He who has no self-respect is no man, but just a lump of flesh. Such is Yusuf's sense of self-respect that when he receives his release order in prison and the king's message of promotion he does not joyfully accept it at once, but declines his release stating that he will not leave the prison until the facts of the case of the women who conspired against him are inquired into.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَاسْتَلْهُ مَا بَالُ
النِّسْوَةِ الَّتِي قَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ

7. Patience is a glorious virtue. It serves as a shield against many sufferings. This virtue is praised more than seventy times in the pages of the Qur'an. Higher and higher status is based on patience.

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةً يَهْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا*

(السجده ١٢ آيت ٢٤)

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا

(اعراف ٧ آيت ١٣٧)

وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَأَنَا إِلَيْهِ

رَاجِعُونَ (بقره) (٢ آيت ١٥٥, ١٥٦)

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ (احقاف ٤٦ آيت ٣٥)

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ (بقره ٢ آيت ٤٥)

“Says the Prophet ﷺ:

الصَّبْرُ نِصْفُ الْإِيمَانِ

“Patience is half faith.” (Bayhaqui in Sha’ab ul Iman)

Asked what is faith, the Prophet ﷺ answered,

وَسُئِلَ عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ فَقَالَ الصَّبْرُ وَالسَّمَاةُ

“Patience and magnanimity.” (Bayhaqui)

Patience prevents one from doing evil; it distinguishes the human being above animals.

Patience is of several kinds: named after the conditions it is practised:

It is continence and chastity in relation to sex, it is called patience if it is about tribulations and sufferings.

Impatience is its opposite,

It is self-control in conditions of wealthiness courage and valour during battle, and similar dangerous conditions, cowardice is its opposite.

In anger, it is forbearance and serenity; and its opposite is lack of self-control in the oppression of the times, it is courage and broad-mindedness, broad-heartedness; opposite: small-heartedness and impatience, hiding the faults of others in poverty, it is contentment, and piety for refraining from indulgence in luxury and amusements.

The Qur'an describes these forms of patience in this one Verse"

وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

Allah had endowed patience so comprehensively on Yusuf in all conditions that he may be described as of the noblest examples of it

- a. He is patient over the sufferings caused him by his brothers.
- b. Patient over being made a slave among a nation so different in culture and religion;
- c. Patient over the fraudulent machinations of Potiphar's wife and the other women.
- d. Patient over becoming warden over Potiphar's household; that is, refraining from vanity, but expressing gratitude to Allah, instead;
- e. Patient over becoming virtual lord of Egypt, and refraining from pride, tyranny and boasting;
- f. Contentment in all conditions of life; and giving preference to piety
- g. Patient when the brothers were humbled and put to shame; that is proving magnanimity of heart.

لَا تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللهُ لَكُمْ

- h. Magnanimity with his persecutes half-brothers in their moment of shame.
- i. Gratitude is one of the noblest virtues. It is a virtue that Allah specially requires of his creatures.

وَاللهُ شَكُوْرٌ حَلِيْمٌ

- j. Gratitude is an attribute by which the blessings of Allah are acknowledged, joyful expression given over them, and they are used in legitimate ways.

Says:the Qur'an:

فَاذْكُرُونِي اذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُوْنَ

Remember Me and I will remember you. And be thankful to me and not ungrateful.
(Baqar 2, Verse 152)

مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَآمَنْتُمْ

Allah will not punish you if you remain faithful and thankful to Him.
(al Nisa 4, Verse 147)

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ

If you are grateful, We will keep increasing Our blessings for you.
(Ibrahim 14, Verse 7)

But it is a pity that in this world few are those who are grateful!

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرُونَ

And among My slaves, very few are those who give thanks.
(Saba 34 Verse 13)

This virtue too Allah had bestowed upon Yusuf very prominently. Study his life and see how at every turn and corner he expresses gratitude to his Maker.

رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَلِيَّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا
وَالْحَقِّيْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ.

O my Lord! Thou hast bestowed on me (something) of sovereignty, and hast taught me (something) of the interpretation of events Creator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my Protecting Friend in the world and the Hereafter. Make me to die submissive (unto Thee), and join me to the righteous.
(Yusuf Verse 101)

The results of malice and envy are bad for the malicious and envious, and although injury may be done physically to the object as well, the envious never prospers, unless he repent and renounce his ways of maliciousness.

The consequences of Yusuf's brothers are before our eyes, but vision is necessary.

Truthfulness, honesty, trustworthiness, patience and gratitude are virtues that make for success and real life. He who is void of them is no human being but an animal and even worse.

أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ (اعراف ٧ آيت ١٧٩)

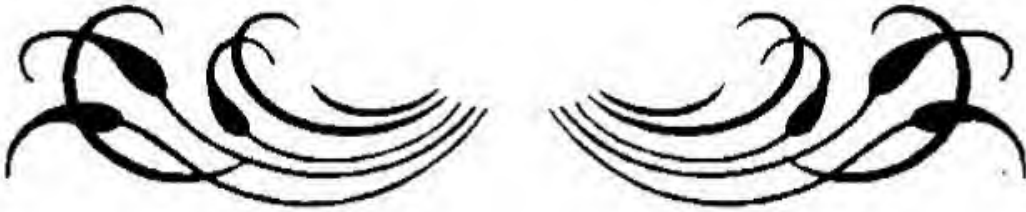
They are like beasts, even worse.

The highest tribute paid to Yusuf is that by our Prophet ﷺ:

al karim bin al Karim bin al Karim bin al Karim, that is to say: Yusuf son of the prophet Yaqoob, son of the prophet Ishaq son of the prophet Ibrahim ؑ.

In another Tradition, the words are Yusuf son of a prophet, son of a prophet son of the friend of Allah!

أَكْرَمُ النَّاسِ يُوسُفُ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ بْنِ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ بْنِ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ بْنِ خَلِيلِ اللَّهِ
(بخاری کتاب التفسیر)



HAZRAT SHUAYB ؑ

Shuayb is mentioned in the Qur'an in some detail in Surah e Houd, Al'araaf and Shu-a-ra and cursorily in Ankabut and Hajar. Besides Hajar, his name occurs ten times in the Book as follows:

In <i>A'araaf</i>	Verses 85, 88, 90, 92	4 times
In <i>Houd</i>	Verses 84, 87, 90, 95	4 times
In <i>Shu-a-ra</i>	Verse 177	1 time
In <i>Ankabut</i>	Verse 36	1 time

Shuayb appeared among the people of Midian, originally the name of a tribe, after which the region came to be named. This tribe or clan was descended from Abraham's son Midian born of his third wife Katura. The clan is known as Banu Katura. Midian had settled down by the side of his step-brother Ismail in Hijaz, and, in course of time, became a big clan. After Shuayb, it was styled as *Qaum e Shuayb*. (Folk of Shuayb).

What region did this clan, tribe or sub-tribe inhabit? Abdul Wahab Najjar's opinion is that the region was adjacent to Syria and the Sinai desert. Others say that it was along Syria in Muaan. The Qur'an introduces us with two features concerning this sub-tribe: one, that it was settled on *Imam e Mobeen* or a prominent highway; *wa inn-huma la-bi-imam-in mobeen*. This highway, in the geography of Arabia, by which Hijaz traders traveled to Syria, Palestine and Egypt, stretched along the eastern banks of the Red Sea, continuing southward even as far as Yemen. It was convenient for travellers by sea also. Two, that they were *ashab e eika*, or people of the bushes. (In Arabic, *eika* are the green wild bushes that grow at random around trees. These two features clearly identify these people. That they lived in the north-west of Arabia, in a region which may be called the limit of Hijaz. Their ruins could be seen facing Tabuk and along the way.

(*Mou'jam ul Buldan*, vol. 5 p. 418)

Not all scholars agree that the Midian and Eika are the same people. They hold that the Midian were civilised city dwellers, and the Eika were nomads living in the woods, and were called 'forest people'. They argue that the duo-plural of *inna huma* indicates these two names, and not the midian or the folk of Lot.

The other scholars who subscribe to a different view, argue that a good climate and abundant rains had made the region so fertile producing fruit & fragrant flowers, that any one coming out of the city and taking a view of the

region would think that the region was one vast cluster of green bushes. That is the reason why the Qur'an refers to it as *eika*.

Hafiz Imad ud Din ibn Kathir thinks that *Eika* was the name of a tree which these people worshipped, and came to be known after it. Where they are referred to as Eika people, Shuayb is not referred to as 'their brother, but where they are referred to as Midian, he is styled so as to indicate his relation to them. However, the general belief is that Eika and Midian are one and the same people, styled as the former with reference to their abode, and as the latter with reference to their genealogy.

The Advent:

In his book Qasas ul Anbiya, Abdul Wahab Najjar writes that Abul Abbas Ahmed Qalaqashandi states in Subh-ul-A'asha (Vol. 4, p. 16).

ثم ملك بعده يعينى يوثام ، ابنه احازست عشرة سنة ايضا كانت
الحرب بينه وبين ملك دمشق وفى زمنه كان شعيب عليه السلام

"Usam ruled for sixteen years with constant warfare between him the king of Damascus. Shuayb's advent was during this period."

The impression one receives is that Shuayb appeared seven to eight centuries after Moses because this was the time when A'haz was ruler. But this is wrong because Shuayb is older than Moses, -but whether Moses saw Shuayb's time is not certain. In Surah e A'raaf, after mentioning details about Nooh, Houd, Saleh, Loot and Shuayb, the Qur'an clearly tells us,

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ مُوسَى

"After them We sent Moses."

The same words are repeated in Suraha Hajj, Yunus, Houd and Ankanut. Qalaqshandi has erred, confusing Shuayb with Sha'ya the period of whose rule corresponds with that of Moses.

The Invitation:

Shuayb saw that evil pervaded the entire society and not mere individuals here and there. None was conscious that his misdeeds were sin, rather, was proud of them. Leaving aside their smaller transgressions, the major evils prevalent among them were:

Idolatry and polytheistic rituals and ways.

Fraud in buying and selling: taking the full measure but giving less than the due.

Dishonesty in every transaction.

Their fertile fields and great wealth had made them vainglorious. They looked upon what they had as the product of their own ability, never for a moment suspecting that it might be a blessing of Allah and be thankful to Him and not rebel against Him. In brief, their opulence had created in them all manner of licentiousness. At last, Allah chose one of their own people to convey the message of truth to them and lead them out of the morass they were engulfed in.

To preach the Unity of Allah and belief that idolatry is a repugnant evil is common to all prophets, but what Shuayb had to deal particularly with was the people's dishonesty in money and business matters, that it should always be kept in mind that everyone must get in full what is his by right, for this principle is the foundation which, if ignored, gives rise to all manner of tyranny and fatal evils. Shuyab was pained very greatly at seeing the evils of the society around him and invited the people to hear his word and be guided out of their ways. He told them to worship only the One True Allah, for no one else is worthy of worship. And he told them to measure the full measure and weigh the full amount.

"It is possible", he said, "that until yesterday they had not heard such words but now the message had come to them, the argument of the Lord and His sign, now ignorance does not merit overlooking, accept the truth and refrain from the false, this is the path to success and real attainment. Do not commit mischief on Allah's earth, Allah has provided everything for its good and peace, if there is any truth, any faith in you, understand that this is the road to welfare, do not sit in to rob people or threaten those who convert to the truth and try to create crookedness in them. Recall the time when you were a few in number, then Allah gave you peace and safety and you increased to become so many.

And consider what was the consequence to them who did mischief in Allah's earth. And if some among you believe and some disbelieve, the matter will not cease just there, but wait patiently until Allah decides finally between us, for, He is the best of judges to decide."

Shuayb was a very eloquent orator, of distinguished beauty of speech, sweetness of tone and fluent in words. Commentators have endowed him with the title *khatib ul anbiya*, "orator among prophets." He conveyed the people his message in the best of ways, but they remained impervious. None responded save a few of the old and weak. They continued in their evil ways.

and obstructed the road of others. They prevented others from going to Shuayb and accepting his word, and if there was opportunity, they would rob them. And if yet one converted, they would threaten him and do their best to make him retract.

Shuayb, however continued his mission until the chiefs of the people told him that one of two alternatives must happen either they would banish him and his followers from their country or he and his followers return to their former faith. Shuayb said that it would be very wrong for him and his followers to return to a religion in spite of looking upon it as wrong. It would be worse; cruelty, in fact. Besides, it would mean that they had been telling lies about Allah and so casting aspersion on Him. This was impossible unless such be Allah's wish, for what He wishes must take place. Our Lord's knowledge comprehends all things. "We trust only in Him. O Lord! decide between us and our people! for Thou are the best of judges". When the chiefs saw this determination of Shuayb, they turned to the masses and warned them that if they followed Shuayb, they would be severely punished.

Shuayb said: "Allah has sent me and that I am to do my best to reform you; and whatever I say, I support by His reason and argument, and presenting signs also. But, it is a pity, that even recognizing all this, you are bent upon disobedience, and you oppose me in every possible way. I ask you no compensation for what I try to do for you, nor do I seek any worldly benefit. My compensation is with Allah. If yet you do not believe, I am afraid that Allah's curse may destroy you. His decision is final and none dare subvert it." The chiefs superciliously said: "Shuayb! Does your way of prayer stop us worshipping the deities our fathers used to worship, and we stop doing with our wealth whatever we like to do with it? If we stop weighing less, or be honest in business matters, we'd go bankrupt and destitute. So can any one with the least sense in him call you a wise leader?" Shuayb said remorsefully and with affection that he was afraid lest their disobedience and wanton ways lead them to the same consequences as befell the people of Noah, Houd, Saleh and Lot. He advised them that there was yet time, they should repent quickly. Allah is Merciful and would forgive them.

The chiefs said: We do not understand much of what you say. You are weaker and poorer than all of us. If your talk was correct, your life would be better than ours. We are really afraid of your relatives, otherwise we would stone you. You can never get the better of us"

Shuayb said: "Are my relatives more to be feared than Allah. Who circumvents all of you, and is Wise and sees everything? However, if you do not believe, go on doing as you wish. Soon Allah's decision will tell you who is more deserving of His punishment. So wait and I too, shall be waiting."

Finally, what happened that what always happens, the everlasting Divine verdict was executed. When people continue to go the way of error even after the light has come to them, and they still ridicule the truth, and obstruct the Word, Allah annihilates their sinful life, making them an example for coming generations.

Nature of Punishment

The Qur'an tells us that Shuayb's people were visited by two kinds of punishment: one, an earthquake, and the second, a rain of fire. The people were asleep in their houses when suddenly the earth began to shake, striking terror in every heart, and the earth and its terror had not quite seized when fire began to come down from the skies above. So the next morning it was seen that the arrogant rebels of yesterday lay on their faces, burnt and scarred.

فَاخَذَتْهُمْ الرِّجْفَةُ فَاصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جُنُودًا (اعراف ع ١١)

So the earthquake seized them and morning found them prostrate in their dwelling place. (Araaf 7 6)

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَآخَذَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمِ الظُّلَّةِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

(الشعراء ع ١٠)

But they denied him, so there came on them the retribution of the day of gloom. Lo! it was the retribution of an awful day. (Sho'ara 26 189)

وَالِى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّي أَرْتِكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُحِيطٍ () وَيَقَوْمِ أَوفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ () بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ () وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ () قَالُوا اإِسْعَيْبُ أَصْلَوْتِكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ نَتْرَكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا وَأَنْ نَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ () قَالَ يَقَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَى بَيْنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَرَزَقْنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَى مَا أَنْهَكُمُ عَنْهُ إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا

اسْتَطَعْتُ ۖ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ () وَيَقَوْمِ
 لَا يَخِرُّ مِنْكُمْ شِقَاقِي أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ مِثْلُ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمِ
 هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمِ صَالِحٍ ۖ وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوطٍ مِنْكُمْ بِبَعِيدٍ () وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ
 ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ () قَالُوا يَشْعِيبُ مَا نَفَقَهُ كَثِيرًا
 مِمَّا تَقُولُ وَإِنَّا لَنَرُّكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفًا وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنَاكَ ۖ وَمَا
 أَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ () قَالَ يَقَوْمِ أَرَهْطِي أَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَاتَّخَذَ
 ثَمُودُ وَرَاءَكُمْ ظَهْرِي ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ () وَيَقَوْمِ
 اعْمَلُوا عَلَى مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَمِلٌ ۖ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۗ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ
 يُخْزِيهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ ۖ وَارْتَقِبُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ () وَلَمَّا جَاءَ
 أَمْرُنَا نَحْنُ شُعَبِيًّا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا ۖ وَأَخَذَتِ الَّذِينَ
 ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ فَأَصْحَوْا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جَثِمِينَ () كَأَن لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَا ۚ
 الْآبَعْدَاءُ لَمَدِينٍ كَمَا بَعَدَتْ ثَمُودُ () (هود)

And unto Midian We sent their brother Shuayb. He said, O my people. Serve Allah Ye have no other God save Him! And give not short measure and short weight. Lo! I see you well to do, and lo! I see for you the doom of a destined Day. O my people! give full measure and full in justice, and wrong not people in respect of their goods. And do not evil in the earth causing corruption. That which Allah leaveth with you is better for you if you are believers, and I am not a keeper over you. They said, O Shuayb! Do thy way of prayer command thee that we should forsake that which our fathers (used to) worship or that we (should leave off) doing what we will with our own property. Lo! Thou art the mild, the guide to right behaviour. He said, O my people! Bethink you, if I am (acting) on a clear proof from my Lord and He sustain me with fair sustenance from Him, (how can I concede aught to you)? I desire not to do behind your backs which I ask you not to do. I desire naught save reform so far as I am able. My welfare is only in Allah. In Him I trust, and unto Him I turn (repentant). And O my people! let not the

schism with me cause you to sin so that there befall you that was befell the folk of Noah and the folk of Hud and the folk of Salih and the folk of Lot are nor far off from you. Ask pardon of your Lord and then turn unto Him (repentant). Lo! my Lord is Merciful, Loving. They said, O Shuayb! We understand not much that thou tellest, and lo! we behold thee weak among us. But for thy family, we should have stoned thee, for thou art strong among us. He said, O my people! Is my family more to be honoured by you than Allah? And ye put Him behind you, neglected! Lo! my Lord surroundeth what ye do. And O my people! act according to your power. I (too) am acting. You will soon know on whom cometh a doom that will abase him, and who it that lieth. And watch Lo! I am a watcher with you. And when Our commandment came to pass, We saved Shuayb and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us; and the awful cry seized and morning found them prostrate in their dwellings, as though they had not dwelt there. A far removal for Midian, even as Thamud had been removed afar.

(Houd 11/ 84-94)

There is a shrine in Hadramaut visited by many people. The inhabitants of the place believe that this shrine is that of the prophet Shuayb. After Midian's destruction, Shuayb had come here. To the west of Hadramauts famous city Sha'yoona is a place known as Shabaam. If one travels north by the Valley Ibn Ali, there comes a spot where the valley ends. There is no habitation here and whoever comes does so as a pilgrim.

Abdul Wahab Najjar says that he doubts if this shrine is that of Shuayb. But he gives no reason for his doubt.

Lessons:

These accounts of past nations are not fiction-stories but lessons to be taken to heart by those who have vision. Even if we do not go deep into them, we can easily derive the following lessons:

We have in Surah e A'araaf that *a clear argument and sign from your Lord has come to you.*"

قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ

But nowhere in the Qur'an has any miracle or 'sign' been associated with Shuayb, as it is with several other prophets. Scholars derive two conclusions from this: One, that even if a prophet performs no miracle but only presents

arguments for Divine message, the plain arguments themselves are his miracle. Second, that the interpretations of the word *bayyannah* should be left to Allah because it is possible that though the Qur'an does not detail them, Shuayb too might have been endowed with miracles as signs, as the other prophets were. and Shuayb must have referred to them in his many addresses.

Among our mistakes the most fatal has been that being indifferent to the Qur'an we believe that all that Islam requires are worship, such rituals known as "ibadat"; and honesty, uprightness in transactions and reforming the society have no great significance. Their result is that most the pious and generally good people are careless of the rights of others and social transactions. But the fact is that Islam attaches so great an importance to social reformation, honesty and trustworthiness and security of human rights that Allah tells us that His sole purpose in sending His greatest of prophets was to protect basic and other rights and reform of all social matters.

To deny other their full right infuses such a virus in human life that it becomes a habit of replacing nobleness, mutual brotherliness and love with greed, selfishness, meanness. That is why Allah announces:

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ () الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ () وَإِذَا
كَالَوْهُمْ أَوْ وُزَنُوا لَهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ()
(مطففين ع ١)

We unto the defrauders, those who when they take the measure from mankind, demand it full, but if they measure unto them or weight for them, they cause them loss.

(Mutaffifeen 83/1-3)

and commands.

أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ (هود ع ٨)

Give full measure and full weight in justice (Houd 7/83)

These words imply that justice is not confined to weighing and measuring alone but with the right of both Allah and man as the basic principle, justice must extend over all that concerns human life. He who does not weigh and measure honestly cannot be expected to observe the requirements of all comprehensive justice. There is no crime greater than doing mischief in Allah's earth. Pride, tyranny, rape and such are born of mischief.

One may recognize falsehood by its want of illumined logic nor does it tolerate illumined argument, and responds by anger, and threat and bloodshed.

Compare the lives of the prophets with their opponents and what you find is that on one side, illuminate arguments are being presented, signs and miracles are being shown, love and compassion expressed, and their mission guarantees no financial obligation, but on the other, they are threatened with banishment, stoning.

And if, finally, the prophets warn them to wait patiently to wait for Allah's verdict to take effect, the answer given them is by ridicule and challenge that if they are truthful, let them bring down on them the punishment they talk about. otherwise they and their mission will be put an end to open for all.

This is the last stage after which Allah's eternal law of retribution takes effect for rebellious and vainglorious nations, leaving them as an example for future generations.



HAZRAT MUSA (Moses) ﷺ

All that the Qur'an tells us about Jacob's children in its chapter on Joseph is that Jacob with his family went to Egypt to meet him. In several other chapters the Qur'an gives their detail, better known now as "Israelites".

Jacob had settled in Egypt permanently and the history of his descendants over the next several centuries is related to Egypt. The Genesis confirms:

"And Pharaoh spoke unto Joseph saying, Thy father and thy brethren have come unto thee. The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell; and if thou knowest of any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle." *Genesis 47/5-6*

"And Joseph placed his father and his brethren and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Ramses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, & all his father's household, with bread according to their families." *Genesis 47/11-12*

"And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possession therein; and grew and multiplied exceedingly." "And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the whole age of Jacob was a hundred and forty seven years." *Genesis: 47/27, 28*

The Genesis also tells us that Joseph had requested Pharaoh to grant his folk the land of Goshen, which Pharaoh happily granted him. *Genesis 47/30, 31*

On Egypt's map this place is to the north of Balbees. A town by the name of Falusa (Sift ul Hanna) still stands here.

We have already mentioned in the chapter on Joseph that Egyptians looked down upon nomads, cattle herdsman and peasants as unclean, and did not approve of socialising with them. Joseph probably wanted his folk to live far from the city so that their healthy, customary life might not be affected by the pagan ways of the Egyptians.

The Genesis also tells us that when the time came near for Jacob to die, he called Joseph and told him that he must not be buried in Egypt but in the land of his fathers i.e., in Palestine

"But I will lie with my fathers and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.

“And he said, swear unto me. And he swore unto him. And he bowed himself on the bed’s head.”
Genesis:47, 30-31

Joseph carried out his father’s wish, had his body mummified, and took it to Palestine where he was buried.

Before dying Jacob summoned all his children as well as Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Muni to his bedside and blessing and praying for them, advised them to keep to the faith of their forefathers, adhere to the sacred relations with the one Allah, and never allow anything pagan to intrude on their beliefs

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَآلَهُ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهُهَا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ()
(بقره)

“Or were ye present when death came to Jacob, when he said unto his sons: What will ye worship after me? They said: we shall worship thy God, the God of thy fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac. One God, and unto Him we have surrendered.
(Al Baqar 133)

The Genesis describes Joseph’s death in these words:

“And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father’s house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.

“And Joseph saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up on Joseph’s knees. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

So Joseph died being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.”

Genesis 50/22-26

“And Musa took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones, away hence with you.”
Exodus 13/19

Accordingly, Joseph's body too was embalmed and preserved in a coffin where it remained until centuries later when the Israelites escaped from Egypt, taking his coffin with them and buried it in Shikam (old name for Nablus) which is in Ephram.

It is claimed by the people of Gabron that Joseph is buried there: in the precincts of Haram e Khalili near Makfila. This contention is wrong. Abdul Wahab Misri says that he was told by Fazil Muhammed Namar Nablusi as well as Amin Buk Abdul Hadi that Joseph was buried in Nablus because the Old Testament states that Joseph was buried in Pharaim. Nablus is in Pharaim, known in the old times as Shakim.¹

The Pharaoh of Musa--

The pharaohs ruled over Egypt from about three-thousand years before Jesus Christ until Alexander, altogether thirty-one generations. Hexus, the Pharaoh ruling over Egypt at the time of Joseph was of a family that was a branch of the Arabs, the Amalika. Most historians believe that the Pharaoh of Musa's time was also a descendant of the Amalika. Some say that his real name was Waleed bin Mus'ab bin Ryan, while others hold that his name was Masab bin Ryan. Some research scholars think that his name was Ryan or Ryan Aba. Ibn Kathir says that his kunyat was Abu Marrah.

All this is based on ancient research, but modern research and stone documents reveal that the Pharaoh of Musa was Manphetah, son of Ramses II, and he ruled from 1292 BC to 1225 BC. Najjar in Qasas ul Anbiya quoting from Ahmed Yousuf Ahmed Affindi the famous Egyptologist tells us:

"It is now established that Joseph came to Egypt during the reign of the sixteenth Pharaoh, named Ababi I, about 1600 BC. This is proved by a stone carving found in Potiphar's tomb and is confirmed also by the archaeological finds which show that about this time there was a great famine in Egypt. Also that Jacob and his family entered Egypt about twenty-seven years after Joseph came.

Although we learn a great deal from these modern discoveries there is nothing to show the hostility that existed between Israelites and the Pharaoh of Musa, the drowning of this Pharaoh and saving of the Israelites.

The Bible tells us that Pharaoh had two cities, Ramses and Pithom, built by the Israelites, using them as labourers. Modern excavations have brought to light a stone tabloid showing the name of one city as Bartoum or Phitom which means House of god Toom, and of the other as Bou Ramses, Palace of Ramses.

¹ Qasas ul Anmbiya p. 187.

The population of Pithom lived in the famous region of Maskhuta. Ramses had his capital at what is now called Qanteer, in ancient Egyptian, Khanatnaqar. Ramses II selected this spot because of its central position towards the sea for serving as a fort. The ruins of the city walls discovered lately prove the invulnerability of the positions of these two metropolises, Ramses and Pithom.

We may reasonably conclude that the Pharaoh who subjected the Israelites to suffering was this Ramses II. He was of the nineteenth generation of the Pharaohs. Musa was born during his reign and brought up in his palace. The architectural finds show that some tribes known as the Asewiyah inhabited the neighbourhood and for nine years there was constant warfare between them and Ramses II.

Fearing an alliance of the Israelites, now comprising thousands, with them, he considered it necessary to subject the Israelites to rigorous treatment, as borne out by the Old Testament and the Qur'an.²

At this time Ramses II had become very old and weak and so made his eldest son, Manphetah, the thirteenth of his one-hundred and-fifty children, to administer the realm. It was Manphetah whom Musa and Haroon invited to Islam and whom Musa requested that the Israelites be allowed to leave the country; It was he in whose time the exodus of the Israelites took place, and he who was drowned along with his troops. Ramses II had died before the exodus. Manphetah had seen Musa being brought up in the royal palace; that is why when Musa invited him to Islam, Manphetah taunted him with the words:

(شعراء) أَلَمْ نُرَبِّكَ فِينَا وَلِيدًا وَلَبِثْتَ فِينَا مِنْ عُمُرِكَ سِنِينَ

Did we not rear thee among us as a child? And thou didst dwell many years of thy life among us." (Shu-ara 18)

Allama Philandrus has discovered an engraving of the year 599 in Egypt on a rock 3 meters 14 centimeters high.

The writing details the services rendered by the eighteenth generation king to the deity Amon & praises Manphetah, son of Ramses II. The epitaph is in

² Exodus Ch. 1 verses 9,10:: "And he said unto his people, Behold the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than us.

"Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest multiply and it come to pass that when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies and fight against us and so get them up out of the land."

poetic style. Manphetah's victory over Yuseen has been glorified here. The fall of Palestine's famous cities, Asqalan, Jeerz, Banu-Eam is passingly referred to, and the Israelites too are mentioned.

لقد سحق بنو اسرائيل ولم يبق لهم بذر -

"All the Israelites perished, and their lineage put to an end."

The writing is not of the time of Manphetah, for, then, according to Egyptian practice, the end of the Israelites would not have been so cursorily stated, but with a glorious ode to Manphetah and the victory over this enemy hailed as a great success. All this on a separate epitaph.

Egyptian priests did not expect the drowning of their Pharaoh Manphetah. Had he lived long enough, they would have kept a record of the main events of his life to have them engraved on an epitaph over his place of burial. But because of his sudden calamity, the facts had to be concealed so that coming generations may not learn of the disgrace that befell the doctrines of their faith. The facts shown were the opposite of the truth. Not Pharaoh but the Israelites were exterminated!

Besides, according to Egyptian custom, every king had his own separate epitaph, recording together with dates, the prominent events of his reign. Some of the royal belongings and jewellery were also buried along with him. But no separate tomb was built for Manphetah, nor any of those rituals carried out for him which were indispensable on the death of a monarch. His body, picked up from the sea shore, was hurriedly buried in the tomb of a previous Pharaoh, thus the corpses of an eighteenth dynasty and a nineteenth dynasty king were gathered in one place. (*Qasa ul Anbiya, pp.239-241*)

Manphetah's body may be seen today in the Museum in Egypt.

الْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلَقَكَ آيَةً -

Today We save thy body (from the waters) that it may be a sign for later generations.

Muhammed Ahmed Advi writes in *Da'wat ul Rusul-ilallah* (p. 181) that the front portion of the nose of this body is missing, probably bitten off by some animal, probably a fish, the body being, then, thrown up on the shore, as Allah had decreed.

These facts require no commentary, but they do provide a lesson for those who believe whatever comes from the orientalist, who doubt what the Qur'an and

its Prophet have to say and look upon the research of the orientalists as more reliable than Divine inspiration; who deny the ulema of Islam and look upon every word of the learned ones of Europe as the word of Allah!

Modern historians of Europe argue that the stories given in the Qur'an and Bible are not substantiated by the findings of modern archaeologists and, therefore, baseless. Egyptians are very sensitive about their history, and it is because of this that the facts of three-thousand years before Christ have been correctly compiled

It is a pity that some Europe-influenced Muslims ignoring the recording of Divine inspiration replace it with the conjectures of modern research. We do not know what conclusions the modernists will now change over to when the hostility of the Israelites and Egyptians has come to light by their own research and the facts as stated in the Qur'an automatically follow up in its wake: whether they will openly repent and express their mistake, or still persist on it.

Pharaoh's Dream

Historians and the Bible state that Pharaoh's hostility with the Israelites began when his priests and astrologers told him that his fall would come about at the hands of an Israeli youth. It is also said that he had seen a terrifying dream which his priests and soothsayers interpreted as the same.

The Old Testament tells us that Pharaoh ordered the midwives of his realm to kill every male child born to an Israeli woman, but the midwives, out of compassion, did not carry out his instructions and when asked, said that Israeli women were tough and did not require any assistance from midwives, therefore, they could not come to know about any birth among the Israelites. Pharaoh, then, appointed a group who were assigned the duty of finding out and killing Israeli boys but sparing the girls. *(Exodus 1 Verses 15-22)*

Musa is mentioned in the Qur'an in many places. This is because several of the events of his life correspond with those of the Prophet Muhammedﷺ, the tussle between slavery and freedom, truth and falsehood comprising an excellent narrative. There is, also, a priceless treasury of sermons and vision. The Qur'an details them in various places accordingly as required

We give below two tables, one to show the chapters and verses in which Musa and Haroon, the Israelites and Pharaoh are mentioned and the other to show in how many places the names of Musa and Haroon are mentioned

TABLE I

<i>Surah</i>	<i>Verses</i>	<i>Number</i>
Baqara.	47-61, 63-75, 83-87, 92, 93, 108:-126, 243-251	65
Nisa	153-156: 164.	12
Maidah	12, 13: 20-25: 32: 45 70, 71. 78, 79	37
al Anaam	84-90: 146: 154. 189	21
al A`raaf	103-157: 159- 171	68
al Anfaal	54	1
Yunus	74-93	20
Houd	96-99.110	5
Ibrahim	5, 6, 8.	3
Nahal	124	1
Bani Israel	2-8, 101 to 104	11
Kahf	60	23
Maryam	51-53.	3
Ta`ha	93-98	9
Anbiya	48: 49	2
Mominoon	45-49	5
Furqan	35: 36	2
Shu-ara	10-66	57
Namal	7-14	8
Qasas	3-48.	46
Ankabut	39: 40	3
Sijdah	23: 24	2
Ahzaab	29	1
al-Safaat	114- 122	9
Momin	23-45	23
Zukhruf	36-56	21

Dukhan	17-33	17
Jasiyah	16;17	2
al Zaariyaat	38-40	3
al Qamar	41-55	15
Saf	5	1
Jum'a	5;6	2
Tahrim	11	1
al Haaqa	9; 10	2
Muzammil	15; 16	2
al Naaz iaat	15-25	11
Fajar	10-13	4
Total		514

TABLE 2

<i>Surah</i>	<i>Musa No. of times</i>	<i>Haroon</i>
Baqara	13	1
Nisa	3	3
Maidah	3	3
al Anaam	3	3
al A'raaf	31	2
Yunus	8	1
Houd	3	
Ibrahim	3	
Bani Israel	3	
Kahf	2	
Maryam	1	2
Ta'ha	17	4
Anbiya	1	1
Mominoon	2	1

Furqan	1	1
Sho-ara	8	2
Namal	3	
Qasas	18	1
Sijdah	1	
Ahzaab	3	
Saffaat	2	3
Momin	4	
Zukhruf	1	
Zaariyaat	1	
Saff	1	
al Naaziaat	1	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	126	20

Lineage and Birth:

Musa's lineage is traceable to Jacob. His father's name was Imran and mother's Eukabud. Imran was the son of Qamat, son of Levi, son of Jacob. Haroon was his real and elder brother.

Musa was born just after Pharaoh had issued his verdict on the killing of Israeli boys. His parents and other family members were, therefore, very worried about their infant's life. For three months they managed to conceal him from outsiders, but this could not be done indefinitely, and the mother's anxiety increased. In such circumstances Allah came to her help and inspired her to make a coffin-like box, polish it with paints, place the baby in it and, leave it in the river Nile.

She did this and advised her daughter, an elder sister of the baby, to walk along the banks keeping an eye on the box to see how Allah kept His promise for looking after the child, because He had already given her the tidings that this boy would return to her and he would grow up to be a prophet.

The girl walked along the bank until the box came to rest opposite the royal palace. Just then a princess espied the strange looking thing on the water and instructed her maids to fetch it for her to see what it contained. The girl was happy to see that the box was taken into the palace. She mixed up among the women to see what would follow next.

The Qur'an tells us that the princess was Pharaoh's wife, while the Old Testament states that she was his daughter. But no importance is attached to this variance. Quite possibly, the box was lifted out of the water by his daughter, but seeing the child, the queen wished to bring it up herself, with Pharaoh's permission, of course.

This is supported by the words of the Qur'an also:

فَالْتَقَطَهُ الْفِرْعَوْنُ

It was picked up by the inmates of Pharaoh's house.

And about the person who desired to adopt him as a son and pleaded not to kill him, the words are:

وَقَالَتِ امْرَأَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ

And Pharaoh's wife said.. ..

A Tradition from Ibn Abbas supports this view.

(Ruh ul Maani Vol. 20 Surah e Qasas)

When the box was opened, they saw a handsome infant sucking his thumb. Pharaoh's daughter took him at once into the palace. The queen was delighted to see him and fondled and caressed him. Some one said that the child looked like a Jewish boy. "Perhaps, a son of our enemies. He should be killed, lest he should grow up to fulfil the dream we have seen."

Now there arose the question of a suitable nurse for the child. And it was seen that he did not suck from any breast. Several of the palace nurses were tried but without success. Then his sister said that she knew of a woman who was very virtuous and probably, more suitable, so if permitted, she could go and fetch her. The queen permitted her to fetch that woman. The girl pranced home joyfully and brought her mother to the palace.

Shah Abdul Qadir Dehlavi's contention in Mauza ul Qur'an that "Pharaoh's wife was an Israeli woman, a cousin of Musa, and by that word she understood that the child belonged to them."

While the talk in the palace was going on, the infant's mother having left him to the river's mercy, was naturally anxious about him and thought if it might not have been better to spill the truth but Allah bestowed peace on her heart. She had not to wait long when her daughter arrived with the good news.

Commentators give her name as Aasiyah while the Qur'an refers to her as a believer. Despite all this, to say that she was an Israeli and cousin of Musa is not correct. She was a woman of Pharaoh's kin.

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ ۖ فَإِذَا حِفَّتِ عَلَيْهِ فَالْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ
 وَالتَّخَافِي وَالتَّحْزِينِ ۖ إِنَّا رَأَيْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَاعِلُوهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ()
 فَالتَّقَطُّهُ ۖ أَلْ فِرْعَوْنَ لِيَكُونَ لَهُمْ عَدُوًّا وَوَحَرَّتْنَا ۖ إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ
 وَجُنُودَهُمَا كَانُوا خَاطِئِينَ () وَقَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَرَّتْ عَيْنِي لِي
 وَلَكِ ۖ لِاتَّقِلُوهُ ۖ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ()
 وَاصْبِحْ فُؤَادًا مِّنْ مَّوْسَىٰ فَرَغَاءٌ ۖ إِنْ كَادَتْ لَتُبْدِي بِهِ لَوْلَا أَن رَّبَطْنَا
 عَلَىٰ قَلْبِهَا لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَقَالَتِ لَأُخَذَ بِقَبَضَتِي ۖ فَبَصُرْتُ بِهِ
 عَنِ حُنُبٍ ۖ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ () وَحَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَرَاضِعَ مِن قَبْلُ
 فَقَالَتْ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَهْلِ بَيْتٍ يَكْفُلُونَهُ لَكُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ
 نَصِيبٌ () فَرَدَدْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ أُمِّهِ كَىٰ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ ۚ وَلَنَعْلَمَنَّ أَنَّهُ وَعْدُ
 اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ () (قصص ع ١)

And We inspired the mother of Musa, suckle him, and when thou fearest for him, then cast him into river, and fear not nor grieve. Lo! We shall bring him back unto thee and shall make him one of Our messengers.

And the family of Pharaoh took him up that he might become for them an enemy and a sorrow. Lo! Pharaoh and Hamman and their hosts were ever sinning.

"And the heart of the mother of Musa became void, and she would have betrayed him, if We had not fortified her heart, that she might be of the believers.

And the wife of Pharaoh said: (He will be) a consolation for me and for thee. Kill him not. Peradventure he may be of use to us, or we may choose him for a son. And they perceived not.

"And she said unto his sister: Trace him. So she observed him from afar, and they perceived not.

"So We restored him to his mother that she might be comforted and not grieve, and that she might know that the promise of Allah is true. But most of them know not.

And We had before forbidden foster-mothers for him, so she said, Shall I show you a household who will rear him for you and take care of him? (Qasas verses 7-13)

وَلَقَدْ مَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَى () إِذَا وَحِينَا إِلَى أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَى () أَنْ
 أَقْدِرَ فِيهِ فِي التَّابُوتِ فَأَقْدِفِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ الْيَمُّ بِالسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ
 عَدُوٌّ لِي وَعَدُوٌّ لَهُ ۗ وَالْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةٌ مِّنِّي ۗ وَتُصْنَعُ عَلَيَّ
 عَيْنِي () إِذْ تَمْشِي أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَكْفُلُهُ ۗ
 فَرَجَعْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَتَلْتَخِزْنَ () (طه ع ٢)

"And, indeed, another time, We have shown thee favour.

"When We inspired in thy mother that which is inspired.

Saying, throw him into the ark, and throw it into the river, the river shall throw it on the bank, and there an enemy to Me and an enemy to him shall take him.. And I endowed thee with love from Me that thou mightest be trained according to My will.

"When thy sister went and said: Shall I show you one who will nurse him? And We restored thee to thy mother that her eyes might be refreshed and might not sorrow"

(Taha 37-40)

The Old Testament says that when the infant, Musa was weaned, his mother handed him over to Pharaoh's daughter to look after him, and he was brought up for many years in the palace; but for this Book to say that Musa "became the son of Pharaoh's daughter", is wrong.

"And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Musa; and she said, because I drew him out of the water."

Exodus Ch. 1, Verse 10

Departure From Egypt:

Musa was fostered in the palace for many years and grew up to be a very handsome and robust and valiant youth. His face inspired awe and his speech was specially dignified, expressing a peculiar stateliness. He also came to know that he was not a blood relation to the Egyptians but an Israeli, and he saw that great persecution was being inflicted on the Israelis; that they were living like slaves. His blood would boil at the thought, and he would try to help them as occasion permitted. Such emotions were, of course, quite natural.

Tabari writes in his history that when Musa grew up, strong and awe-inspiring as he was, the effect on the Egyptian officers was that their persecution of the Israelis became considerably less.

Now Allah's hand of munificence to Musa was extended further. He was endowed with knowledge and wisdom, decision making and vision, so that by the time he was of mature age, he was a man not only of physical stature but also of spiritual loftiness.

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ، وَاسْتَوَىٰ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا ۗ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِينَ
(قصص ع ٢)

“And when he reached his full strength and was ripe. We gave him wisdom and knowledge. Thus do We reward the good.”
(Al Qasas Verse 14)

One day while Musa saw an Egyptian dragging an Israeli on the road to do some work for him without paying any wage. When the Israeli saw Musa he called out to him for help. Musa interceded for him and tried to dissuade the Egyptian from his maltreatment of the man, but the Egyptian refused to listen, provoking Musa who in a temper hit him so hard that the Egyptian fell unconscious and died. Musa had not intended to kill him and was overcome by remorse. Satan, he though had made him do this. He turned to Allah for His mercy and forgiveness, and Allah forgave him.

The news of the Egyptian's death spread in the city, but no one knew who had killed him. Pharaoh was informed about the Egyptians pleading that this must be some Israeli's doing.

Pharaoh answered that they should find out who had committed the crime, and he would punish him.

Incidentally, the next day also Musa was sauntering by the outskirts of the city when he saw the same Israeli disputing with an Egyptian, and the Israeli again called out to Musa for help. Musa had the previous day's incident fresh in his mind, at the same time there was the Egyptian's oppressive behaviour before his eyes and the Israeli's clamouring and wailing. Musa extended his hand to separate the two, and rebuked the Israeli, telling him harshly that he too was to blame. (*Innaka la-gHAVI-un mobin*). The Israeli misunderstood, thinking that Musa had extended his hand to strike him and exclaimed

أَتُرِيدُ أَنْ تَقْتُلَنِي كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا بِالْأَمْسِ -

“Wouldst thou kill me as thou didst kill a man yesterday?”

Hearing these words, the Egyptian hastened to tell Pharaoh's officers that the man who killed the Egyptian the day before was none other than Musa. Pharaoh ordered that Musa be arrested and brought before him. On this occasion, among the Egyptians there was one, a kin of Pharaoh, who had great faith in Musa and knew the Israeli religion quite well. He slipped out and hastening to Musa, told him of the latest development and advised him to escape to some land beyond Pharaoh's reach. Musa complied and went away to Midian.

The Qur'an tells us about this man that

وَحَاءَ رَجُلٌ مِّنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ سَعَىٰ -

a man came running from the city's outskirts

We have added the words, noble and honourable for him, because, as Najjar says, according to a proverb, the noble and honourable live on "the outskirts of the city"; and secondly, because the man had said, *innal malaa-aya tamurrona hi-ka li-yaqtaloonaka* "the upper crust of the people are advising that you should be killed". Such information could be available only to one who was near to Pharaoh and his courtiers.¹

وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ عَلَىٰ حِينِ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلَانِ
 هَذَا مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ وَهَذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَاسْتَغَاثَهُ الَّذِي مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ عَلَى
 الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَوَكَّلَهُ مُوسَىٰ فَقَضَىٰ عَلَيْهِ ۗ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ
 الشَّيْطَانِ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ مُّضِلٌّ مُّبِينٌ () قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي
 فَاغْفِرْ لِي ۖ فَغَفَرْتَهُ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ () قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَنعَمْتَ
 عَلَيَّ فَلَنْ أَكُونَ ظَهِيرًا لِّلْمُجْرِمِينَ () وَأَصْبَحَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ
 خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي اسْتَنْصَرَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَسْتَصْرِحُهُ ۗ قَالَ لَهُ
 مُوسَىٰ إِنَّكَ لَغَوِيٌّ مُّبِينٌ فَلَمَّا أَنِ ارَادَ أَنْ يَنْطِشَ بِالَّذِي هُوَ عَدُوٌّ
 لَهُمَا ۗ قَالَ يُمُوسَىٰ أَتُرِيدُ أَنْ تَقْتُلَنِي ۖ كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا بِالْأَمْسِ ۗ إِنَّ
 تُرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ جَبَّارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ

¹ Qasas ul Anbiya p.197

المُصْلِحِينَ () وَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ مِّنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْعَى قَالَ يُوسَىٰ إِنَّ
 الْمَلَأَ يَأْتَمِرُونَ بِكَ لَيَقْتُلُوكَ فَاخْرُجْ إِنِّي لَكَ مِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ ()
 فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ قَالَ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ()

(قصص ع ٨)

And he entered the city at a time of carelessness of its folk, and he found therein two men fighting, one of his own caste and the other of his enemies. So Musa struck him with his fist and killed him. He said, This is of the devil's doing. Lo! he is an enemy, a mere misleader.

He said, My Lord! Lo! I have wronged my soul, so forgive me. Then He forgave him. Lo! He is the forgiving, the Merciful!

He said, My Lord! For as much as Thou hast favoured me, I will never be a supporter of the guilty.

And morning found him in the city, fearing, vigilant, when behold! he who had appealed to him the day before cried out to him for help. Musa said unto him, Lo! Thou art indeed a mere hothead.

And when he had fallen upon the man who was an enemy unto them both, he said, O Musa, Wouldst thou kill me as thou didst kill a person yesterday. Thou wouldst be nothing but a tyrant in the land, thou wouldst be of the reformers.

And a man came from the uttermost parts of the city, running. He said, O Musa Lo! the chiefs take counsel against thee to slay thee, therefore, escape. Lo! I am of those who give thee good advice.

So he escaped from thence, fearing, vigilant. He said, My Lord! Deliver me from the wrongdoing folk!

(Qasas Verses 15-21)

وَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا فَنَجَّيْنَاكَ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَفَتَنَّاكَ فُتُونًا () (طه)

And thou didst kill a man and We delivered thee from great distress, and tried thee with a heavy trial.

(Ta'ha Verse 40)

Here we find some difference between the Qur'an and the Old Testament. The Qur'an states that of the two quarreling men one was a Jew and the other an Egyptian, while Exodus says that both men were Jews. Besides the Exodus makes no mention of a third man who came running to Musa to inform him of the consultations being held against him.

Reflecting impartially, the Qur'anic version is the correct one because the life of a Jew held no value in the eyes of the Egyptians that they would go to the extent of punishing one brought up in the royal palace in reprisal for killing a Jew.

The addition of a third man, sympathiser of Musa, is quite logical.

Musa in Midian:

Musa chose Midian, eight travel-stages far⁵, because this place was inhabited by tribes who were his blood relations, both being descendants of Isaac.

Because Musa had run away on account of Pharaoh, he was unaccompanied by any human being, and because of the speed he had to go, he had lost his shoes and was barefooted. His food on the way was of leaves, and there were blisters on the soles of his feet.⁶ It was thus he arrived in Midian.

On Midian soil the first sight that greeted him was that of a crowd of people drawing water from a well for their animals, while two girls stood at some distance with their pitchers, evidently waiting their turn. Musa realised that in Midian too, the rule of the law was that might is right. The girls, he thought, were from a poor and weak family, and would not be able to get to the water until the clean water had been used up and what remained for them was the last slushy part.

The famous Arab poet Amr b. Kulsoom writes:

وَنَشْرَبُ إِن وَرَدْنَا الْمَاءَ صَفْوًا
وَيَشْرَبُ غَيْرُنَا كَدْرًا وَطِينًا

"When we come to a water, the clean and pure comes to our lot. And those who are strangers to us, get the muddy and the mud."

The poet, here, is not portraying his own condition or that of his tribe, but the universal rule.

⁵ Tibri from Saeed b. Jubeer Vol. 1 p. 205

Musa could not bear to see the helplessness of the girls. He stepped forward and asked the girls why they stood behind the others. They replied that if they came forward, they would be pushed away to the back; that their father was old and unable to help them; and that it was their daily routine.

Musa could not restrain himself. He tore through the crowd and picking up the largest bucket at the well drew water and gave it to the girls' animals to drink. The crowd was clearly over-awed by his dignified personality and his physical strength.

Some commentators think that there was a large stone on the mouth of the well which only several people together could move, but Musa shifted it himself. Najjar's opinion is that this is contrary to what the Qur'anic text implies.

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ ()

(قصص ع ٣)

"And when he came unto the water of Midian he found there a whole tribe of men watering ." (Qasas)

How, then, can it be possible that the well was covered with a large stone? Similarly it is wrong to suggest that there were two wells, one from which water was being drawn, and the other with its top covered; and that traces of the existence of two wells at that time have been found.

The Qur'an makes no mention of a second well. What it does mention is concerned with only one water-well. If a second well is to be seen now, it does not mean that it existed at that time also. It is quite possible that the second well was constructed during the Islamic period due to the pressing need of a second one. It is highly improper to make the simple, straightforward statement of the Qur'an complicated for the sake of an inauthentic *riwaya*.

We revert to our theme. When the girls had their flock watered, they returned home. Their father asked them why they had come back sooner than the usual time, and they told him that an Egyptian had helped them to water the flock. He told one of the girls to go fast and invite the man to the house as he would like to repay him for his kindness and assistance. She hurried back to the well and found Musa resting under a tree. He was tired and hungry and prayed Allah for whatever He might bestow, as he was in need of His providence.

With modesty and eyes down, she told Musa that her father wished to invite him as he would like to repay him for his kindness and assistance. Musa felt that his prayer had been heard, and he rose to his feet, asking the girl to walk behind him and guide by pointing with her hand or throwing pebbles. As the

two walked, he kept thinking of the words, "repay for your kindness and help" He also thought that in the present circumstances, he would have to accept the obligation suggested by the word "repay" He would thus also obtain the friendship of someone in a land where he was a total stranger.

He was given a hearty welcome when he arrived at the home of the venerable gentleman who had invited him. With the preliminary greetings and talk over, Musa was first entertained to a dinner, after which a long conversation followed. Musa relating his birth, his life in the royal palace right down to his present escape to Midian and Pharaoh's persecution of the Israelis. The host consoled Musa, telling him to thank Allah for having saved him, and that now there was nothing to be feared.

By the tyranny of the persecutors is implied the killing of Israeli Children, slavery of the Israelis and their many sufferings, and Egyptian unbelief (*kufir*) and mischief as well. As for the killing of the Qubti, Musa himself was repentant about it, and held himself guilty.

وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تَلْقَاءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ عَسَى رَبِّي أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِي سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ()
 وَلَمَّا وَرَدَمَاءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ ۖ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ
 دُونِهِمُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ ۗ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا ۖ قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّى
 يُصْدِرَ الرَّعَاءُ وَأَبُونَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ () فَسَقَى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى إِلَى الظِّلِّ
 فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ () فَجَاءَتْهُ إِحْدَاهُمَا
 تَمْشِي عَلَى اسْتِحْيَاءٍ ۖ قَالَتْ إِنَّ أَبِي يَدْعُوكَ لِيَجْزِيَكَ أَجْرَ مَا
 سَقَيْتَ لَنَا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ وَقَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الْقِصَصَ ۖ قَالَ لَا تَخَفْ ۗ
 نَجَّوْنَا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ () (قصص ع ٣)

"So he escaped from thence, fearing, vigilant. He said, My Lord! Deliver me from the wrong-doing folk.

And when he turned his face toward Midian, he said: Peradventure my Lord will guide me in the right road

And when he came unto the water of Midian he found there a whole tribe of men watering. And he found apart from them two women keeping back (their flocks). He said what aileth you? The two said, We cannot give (our flocks) to drink till the shepherds return from the water, and our father is a very old man.

So he watered (their flock) for them. Then he turned aside into the shade and said, My Lord! I am in need of whatever good Thou sendest down on me

Then there came unto him one of the two women, walking shyly. She said, Lo! My father biddeth thee, that he may reward thee with a payment, for thou didst water (the flock) for us. Then when he came unto him and told him the (whole) story, he said, Fear not! Thou hast escaped from the wrong-doing folk. (Qasas Verses 21-25)

There are two differences here between the Qur'an and the Old Testament version. The Old Testament states that there were seven women waiting to water their flocks, while the Qur'an mentions only two.

The Exodus also says that the women had filled the pond with water but the men pushed them away and began to water their own flocks.

We should rely on the Qur'anic version because the style of the Qur'an is to go according to the laws of human nature and commonsense. It is unlikely that the women had filled the pond with water and Musa saw them being pushed away which infuriated him. The women were inhabitants of Midian and knew very well that the men do not let the women use the first and clean water, a rule prevalent everywhere. This was the daily routine. Therefore, how could they dare fill up first and first water their own flock?

As for the number of women present by the well, it is possible, as Ibn Kathir thinks, that the old gentleman had seven daughters, but at the time the incident took place, only two of them were present there.

The girl who had gone to call Musa, said to her father that it would be convenient if his guest were employed to pasture and water the flock. The best labourer, she said, was he who was physically strong as well as trustworthy.

Commentators say that these words of his daughter sounded strange to the father who asked her how she came to form such an opinion of their guest. She replied that his physical strength was proved by his having drawn the largest bucket filled with water all by himself, and his trustworthiness was proved by his turning his gaze away from her when she went to call him, and when the two of them walked home, he asked her to walk behind him.

The venerable old father was happy at these words of his daughter, and said to Musa, "If you stay with us for eight years and look after our goats, I shall marry my daughter to you, and if you increase this period by another two

years, it will be of your own accord. This will also be the dowry due from you.

Musa accepted the proposal, saying, "Leave the period of eight or ten years to my option. You will not compel me in this regard."

After this mutual agreement and, holding either period of service as the dowry the venerable father married his daughter to Musa.

Some commentators think that the marriage took place after Musa had completed his term of service, and immediately after he took his wife, Saphura, and departed.

قَالَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا يَا أَبَتِ اسْتَأْجِرْهُ إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنِ اسْتَأْجَرْتَ الْقَوِيُّ
الْأَمِينُ (١) قَالَ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُنكِحَكَ إِحْدَى ابْنَتَيَّ هَاتَيْنِ عَلَى أَنْ
تَأْجُرَنِي ثَمَنِي حَجَّجٌ فَإِنْ أَتَمَمْتَ عَشْرًا فَمِنْ عِنْدِكَ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ
أَشُقَّ عَلَيْكَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (٢) قَالَ ذَلِكَ بَيْنِي
وَبَيْنَكَ أَيَّمَا الْأَجَلَيْنِ قَضَيْتُ فَلَا عُدْوَانَ عَلَيَّ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى مَا نَقُولُ
وَكَافٍ (١)

(قصص ع ٣)

"One of the two women said: O my father! hire him, for, he best that thou canst hire is the strong, the trustworthy.

He said, Lo! I fain would marry thee to one of these two daughters of mine on condition that thou hirest thyself to me for (the term) of eight pilgrimages. Then, if thou completest ten, it will be of thine own accord, for, I would not make it hard for thee. Allah willing, thou wilt find me of the righteous.

He said: That (is settled) between thee and me, Whatever of the two terms I fulfil, there will be no injustice to me, and Allah is surety over what we say." (al Qasas: Verses 26-28)

فَلَبِثْتَ سِنِينَ فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ ۖ ثُمَّ جِئْتَ عَلَىٰ قَدَرٍ مِّنْ أَسَىٰ (١)
وَاصْطَنَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِي - (طه ع ٢)

"Then thou didst tarry in Midian some years; then thou didst prove thyself worthy, O Musa. And I have chosen thee"
(Taha)

As the Qur'an has nowhere mentioned the name of the old Sheykh of Midian, we find some differences of opinion among the commentators on this point.

Many of them from Arabia believe that he was none other than Shuayb. This opinion is quite popular.

The famous commentator, Ibn Jarir Tibri quotes Hassan Basri as holding: that "Musa's Shaykh is Shuayb (peace be on him)"⁸

Hafiz Imad ul Deen Ibn Kathir confirms that Hassan Basri is inclined to this view; and also that Ibn Abi Hatim says that it was reported to Maalik b. Anas, with full authority that this Shaykh was Shuayb.⁹

Another school of thought claimsthat his name was Yazoon, a nephew of Shuayb. Tibri has quoted an authoritative Tradition that this Shaykh's name was Yazoon, Shuayb's nephew.¹⁰

Tibri also quotes another Tradition, from Ibn Abbas that the name of the Shaykh who hired Musa was Yazri. The same tradition says, that "the woman's father was Yazri. But this Tradition does not mention that Yazri was a nephew of Shuyab."¹¹ The Old Testament gives a similar sounding name, Yazro.¹²

There are others who think that this Shaykh was one of the believers of Shuayb.

And yet others believe that Musa's father-in-law was neither Shuayb nor any nephew of his, because Shuyab lived centuries before Musa. The Qur'an says that Shuyab pointed out to his people: "*The example of Lot's folk is not distant from you*"

Lot's folk were contemporaries of Abraham, more than four-hundred years before Musa. It is not correct that Shuyab lived to an extraordinarily old age. The assertion is not authenticated.

It is also perfectly reasonable to argue that if the Shaykh of Musa were Shuayb, the Qur'an would definitely have stated so.

⁸ Tafsir Surah e Qasas

⁹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Vol. 1, p248

¹⁰ Tafsir Ibn Jarir: Vol.1 p. 206.

¹¹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir: Vo.-7 p. 248.

¹² These references prove that Syed Sulayman is not right in holding that Muslim commentators, generally, believe that Yazro and Shuayb are one and the same.

It is our opinion that just as the Qur'an does not clarify the name, we too should leave the matter to Allah's knowledge. This is Ibn Kathir's opinion which does not look upon any of the related traditions as correct and reliable. His words are:

قال ابو جعفر (الطبري) وهذا مالا يدرك علمه الا بخبر ولا
خبر بذلك تجب حجة فلا قول في ذلك اولى بالصواب مما قاله
الله جل ثناؤه (الخ)

"Abu Jafar Tibri says that this issue cannot be resolved without proper information. There exists no tradition which may be used as logical argument. Therefore, the best thing to do is what the Qur'an does (adopt silence)."

Ibn Jarir has in his mind the words of the Qur'an, *Wa abuna shaykh un kabir*.

Abdul Wahab Najjar tells us that once he had occasion to argue with very learned alim who said that since Musa was a very great prophet, no one but a prophet could dare make Musa his labourer, and this prophet could only be Shuayb.

Abu Najjar retorted that this was no logical argument at all. At best, it is a conjecture requiring conclusive support. Besides, until that time Musa had not been endowed the prophethood. *(Qasas ul Anbiya p. 204)*

However, there is no credible tradition to clarify the words *shaykh un kabir*. And there is not one among the many traditions quoted by Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir, except Bazzar and Ibn Hatim, that mentions the name. About these two traditions, Ibn Kathir says:

مدار هذا الحديث على عبدالله بن هبة المصري وفي حفظه سوء
واخشى ان تكون رفعه خطأ

This tradition is based on the opinion of Ibn Lahiya of Egypt who had a very poor memory. To call it marfu is a mistake.

Ibn Jarir says

تم قدروى الضائق من حديث عتبة من المنذر بزيادة عربية حداً

Similarly there is a tradition from al-Munzir, but with a serious omission (of the name)



Cliffs in Sinai desert



Sinai desert



The tomb of Sayyidina Haroon عليه السلام on the top of a mountain. It is said that this great prophet was buried here.



Mount Sinai also called
Jabal -e- Musa - Sinai desert.



The pathway to
Jabal-e- Musa (Mount Sinai) .

Musa fulfilled the term of his agreement, ten years, as most commentators agree, looking after the sheep and goats. The Qur'an does not tell us how long after the completion of the term Musa stayed with his father-in-law, but commentators say that immediately after, Musa set off for Egypt with his family and the lambs and kids which had recently been born.

فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَجَلَ وَسَارَ بِأَهْلِهِ آنَسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَارًا

(قصص ع ٤)

“Then when Musa had fulfilled the term and was traveling with his housefolk, he saw in the distance a fire.....

(al Qasas verse 29)

These commentators are not right in their assertion that Musa left immediately after the completion of his term of agreement. This is illogical and against the sequence of events. The *Mualim ul Tanzil* states that Musa stayed with his old father-in-law for another ten years. The Exodus supports this. Musa did not leave immediately for Egypt. It was only when he wandered about with his flock, and happened to arrive in the Sacred Valley, and received Allah's command to go to Egypt and rescue his people from Pharaoh's persecution, that he went there.

“Now Musa kept the flock of Yazro, his father in law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of Allah, Horeb.

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; And he saw that, the bush burning with fire, but was not consumed.

And Musa said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

“And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, Allah called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and he said, Here am I.

“And He said, Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place thou standest is holy ground.

“Moreover, He said, I am Allah of thy father, Allah of Abraham, and Allah of Jacob; and Musa hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon Allah.

“And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows.

“And I have come down to deliver them out of the land of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzite and Hivites and the Jebusites.

“Now, therefore, hear the cry of the Children of Israel that has come unto Me; and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.

Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth my people, the Children of Israel out of Egypt.” (Exodus:3/: 1-10)

“And Musa went and returned to Yazro his father-in-law, and said unto him, “Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Yazro said to Musa: Go in peace.”

(Ch.4/18)

It is best to leave the matter to the knowledge of Allah. The words, *fa lamma qada Musa al ajala wa sara bi ahla-hi* (When he had fulfilled his term, he departed with his housefolk) do not, probably, imply that Musa left for Egypt.

Had it been so, he would not have said, when he was commanded to go to Egypt, that he was afraid, for he had killed a man there:

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي قَتَلْتُ مِنْهُمْ نَفْسًا فَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَقْتُلُونِ (قصص)

“I had killed one of their men, and I am afraid they will kill me.” (al Qasas)

وَلَهُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَنْبٌ فَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَقْتُلُونِ (الشعراء)

“And I have sinned against them, and I am afraid they will kill me.” (al Shuara).

The words are clear: up to this time Musa did not have the courage to set out for Egypt; but when he received Allah’s command and reassurance to go there, he immediately set off for Egypt and did not even care to call on his father-in-law for his permission.

The Exodus tells us that during his stay in Midian, a son was born to his wife, whom he named Gershom, (which in Midian-Hebrew literally means travelling in a foreign land).

“And Musa was content to dwell with the man; and he gave Zipporah his daughter.

And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom; for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.” (Exodus2/ 21-22)

One day Musa pasturing his flock of goats, went quite far beyond Midian. There was nothing strange about this, for shepherd tribes. But it was a cold night, requiring fire to warm up, and not far, the eastern range of Mount Sinai could be seen, beyond which, at a distance of one day's journey were the two forks of the Red Sea, lying on the way to Egypt. Musa tried to light a fire with a flint but this did not work. Then looking in the direction of Aiman valley he saw bright fire burning. Telling his family to stay where they were, he went in the direction of the fire to get a brand of it and, perhaps, find some one who might direct the way for him.

فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا لَعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجْدُ
عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى - (ع طه)

"When he saw a fire and said unto his folk : Wait! Lo, I see a fire afar off; peradventure, I may bring you a brand therefrom or may find guidance at the fire."

(Ta'ha, Verse 10)

Musa was confused when he came near the fire, because although bright, it neither consumed the tree it was on, nor was it extinguished. And the nearer he came, the further it withdrew. He felt afraid and turned around to retrace his way, but the fire came near and a voice called out:

يَمُوسَىٰ إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (قصص)

"O Musa! I am Allah the Lord of the Worlds."

فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ يَمُوسَىٰ إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ ۚ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ
الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى () وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَىٰ () (ع طه)

"And when he reached it, he was called by name, O Musa! Lo! I even I am thy Lord! So take off thy shoes, for lo! thou art in the holy Valley of Tuwa.

And I have chosen thee, so hearken unto that which is inspired."

(Ta'ha Verse 11.)

From these and other verses of the Qur'an, two points have been picked up by some commentators to clarify :

- The thing, Musa assumed to be fire was not fire but the light of Allah; and the voice he heard was not the voice of Allah but that of angel; that is, indirectly the voice of Allah.

Others believe that it was directly the voice of Allah, just as prophets hear the Divine voice by inspiration (*wahi*) from behind a veil.¹³

- b. Why was Musa commanded to take his shoes off in the holy valley when the *sahih* Traditions show that the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his companions used to pray in mosques with their shoes on. If footwear is clean, prayers with it is perfectly permissible. So why was Musa commanded to take his shoes off? The answer is given in a Tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who said,

كَانَتْ مِنْ جِلْدِ حِمَارٍ مَيِّتٍ

*"Musa was wearing shoes made of the skin of an ass which had died a natural death"*¹⁴

However, Musa is now a full-fledged prophet; Allah has chosen him to preach the right religion and relieve the Children of Jacob from their pains and emancipate them from Pharaoh's slavery. He is being honoured by talking with Allah. The Musa who had lost his way in Midian, is being appointed to guide the people of so civilised and highly cultured a people as the Egyptians and their proud, rebellious king! He who, until yesterday had been looking after camels and goats has been chosen today to guide all mankind; he who had been pasturing flocks of sheep, is today attaining perfection, shepherding Allah's best creation, man!

These are the miracles of Allah which keep pricking the hearts even of those who deny them by their tongues!

When Musa heard the voice of Allah and realised that he had been endowed with the very highest of human exaltation and the ultimate symbol of Allah's munificence, he stood dumbfounded. Then, he was asked:-

وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يَا مُوسَى ()

"O Musa, What is it you hold in your right hand"?

This question of the Beloved to His faithful lover, Musa lost in his love, answered without restraining his words to the measure of the question; i.e., no more words than necessary:

هِيَ عَصَايَ ۖ أَتَوَكَّأُ عَلَيْهَا وَأَهُشُّ بِهَا عَلَى غَنَمِي

¹³ Ibn Tamima, Sifat ul Kalam p. 27

¹⁴ Tafsir Ibn Kathir and Fath ul Bayan Vol.6. p. 229

"This is my staff whereon I lean and wherewith I beat down branches for my sheep, and wherein I find other uses."

Musa seems to be torn between the exuberance of his love and his sense of respect for being in the Divine presence. In answer he should have said no more than "My staff" but how could he control his exuberance of love which was impatient to go on conversing with the Beloved. He goes into describing its uses, then suddenly his sense of reverence for the Beloved stops him, and he finishes off by saying,

وَلِي فِيهَا مَارَبٌ أُخْرَى ()

"And I have other uses, too, with it."

O Lord! The fervour of my heart and impatience of the spirit urge me to go on with what I am relishing, but my sense of respect resists, and the eye of vision commands silence, otherwise the tale of love is long!

عشق کتا ہے جنوں کا جوش رہنا چاہئے ضبط کی تاکید ہے خاموش رہنا چاہئے
قصہ موسیٰ! سبق ہے ہوش والوں کیلئے کس طرح عشاق کو خاموش رہنا چاہئے

Love says the fervour of Madness should remain;

Restraint urges me to keep silence.

Musa' story is a lesson for the conscious

How lovers should remain speechless!!

الْقِهَا يُمُوسَى ()

To reassure Musa, Allah advises him to throw his staff: down on the ground

فَالْقِهَا فَاِذَا هِيَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَى ()

And Musa does so, but the staff now becomes as a live, running reptile.

Musa, being, after all, human, turns about to flee but Allah calls out to him

قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا الْأُولَى ()

"Grasp it and fear not We shall return it to its former state."

Musa's staff was forked at the top which made it look like a snake. Nearness to the Divine presence gave peace to Musa, and without the least fear, he grasped the forked part. With his touch, the reptile became a staff again.

And now Allah commanded him to thrust his hand under his armpit and rub it there, then, pull it out and see that it comes out shining white.

وَاضْمُمْ يَدَكَ إِلَىٰ جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجُ بَيْضَاءَ مِن غَيْرِ سُوءٍ آيَةً أُخْرَىٰ ()

(طه ع ١)

“And thrust thy hand within thy armpit, it will come forth white, without hurt. (That will be) another token.”

(Ta'ha 22)

Just as Allah endowed Musa with the prophethood, He also equipped him with two great miracles, both for his conviction and reassurance and also to serve as confirming his argument with Pharaoh,

لِنُرِيكَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا الْكُبْرَىٰ () (طه ع ١)

That We may show thee (some of our greater) portents.

(Taha: 23,24)

فَذَانِكَ بُرْهَانَانِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا

(قصص ع ٤)

فَاسِقِينَ ()

“Then these shall be two proofs from your Lord unto Pharaoh and his chiefs. Lo! they are evil living folk!”

(al Qasas: 32)

Now go and show Pharaoh and his people the right guidance. They are disobedient and rebellious in the extreme, and in their pride and arrogance have enslaved the Isrealis. Go and emancipate them!

Musa very humbly said that he had accidentally killed one of their men, and he feared that they would kill him in reprisal. And also that they would deny his word. “I pray Thee”, Musa said, “that Thou expand my breast and fill it with Thy light, and make this service easy for me, and untie the knot that is on my tongue, so that it may be easy for them to understand my word, and because I am not fluent of speech, but my brother Haroon is, so endow him also with prophethood and make him my henchman.”

Allah assured him that none would be able to harm him at all, for, His help was with him; and that the miracles he had been furnished with would lead him to victory. His prayer about Haroon, too, was granted.

Further, Allah advised Musa to speak gently with Pharaoh and his people, when inviting them to the right path, for, it was possible that they might relent, and fearing Allah might refrain them from their cruelty.

Suddi tells us that Musa having been endowed with the prophethood, and honoured by direct talk with the Divine Being and assured of victory in his mission of Truth, went down from the holy valley and returned to his wife who was anxiously waiting for him, and with her Musa set off for Egypt.

It was night time when, covering several stages of the journey, he arrived there. He made his way to his mother's house but did not enter. The house was known for its hospitality, and he was taken for a traveller, treated to a sumptuous dinner.

Meanwhile Haroon his elder brother who had also been endowed with prophethood, was informed by inspiration and he came. The two brothers met, embraced and went in to meet their mother. Musa related to her the events of his life during his absence and all were delighted and happy at the reunion.¹⁵

The Exodus relates in these words:

"And the Lord said to Haroon. Go into the wilderness to meet Musa. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and blessed him.

*And Musa told Haroon all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him."*¹⁶

Musa had prayed Allah in the holy vale to loosen the knot of his tongue, and had said that Haroon, his brother, was fluent of speech. Some commentators have quoted a narrative to the effect that one day, when Musa was just a baby, and was sitting in Pharaoh's lap, attracted by the shining pearls of his necklace, pulled at them, as babies do. Together with the pearls, some hair of Pharaoh's beard were also pulled. This annoyed Pharaoh so greatly that he wanted the baby to be killed, but the queen pleaded with her husband that the baby could hardly be expected to be familiar with court etiquette or distinguish between a date and a burning coal. So Pharaoh said he would put this to the test at once, and ordered that burning coals and some dates be brought to see which of them the baby would pick up. If the baby picked up a date, he would have him killed. But when the two things were brought, the baby picked up a burning coal and placed it in his mouth, scalding his tongue. This permanently affected his speech.

Najjar Misri disagrees and offers his own opinion: either that when Musa was taken out of the river Nile, a nurse could not be found for him immediately. Searching for a nurse must have taken considerable time because Musa would not suck of any breast until his own mother turned up. Going without milk for so long dried up the baby's tongue, a common occurrence in such a situation.

¹⁵ Tarikh Ibn e Kathir Vol, 1. p. 252

¹⁶ Exodus 4: 27-28

Or that Musa having sojourned in Midian for more than twenty years, if we are to go by the Exodus, it is natural that he must have lost fluency with the Egyptian language, while Haroon who had never gone out of Egypt, did not lose any of his grasp of the Egyptian language.

But Haroon was familiar with both Hebrew and Egyptian. Hebrew, his mother tongue, was jealously guarded by the Jews keeping it alive despite the passage of centuries, while Egyptian was necessary for day to day communication with the people of the country. Besides, there was very little difference between Hebrew and the Midian dialect because both were connected with the descendants of Abraham.

Najjar says, that of these two versions, he is inclined to believe the former.¹⁷

We do not agree with Najjar at all. The former version does not appeal to us. The matter of finding a nurse is only cursorily mentioned in the Qur'an, and going by the Exodus and historical data, was solved within a few hours. After the royal orders, how could there possibly be a delay of several days to find a nurse.

The second opinion, too, of Najjar is not credible. The words, 'Haroon is more eloquent' are understandable, but to equate the words 'knot on my tongue' with 'forgetting the Egyptian language' is meaningless, seeing that Musa's prayer had been heard.

The fact seems to be that Musa was born with a slight defect of speech. All Musa prayed for was that this innate defect may not stand in the way of his message being understood by his audience. For speeches requiring greater fluency and eloquence, Haroon, already a much required support, was better equipped. Both his prayers were answered.

Some commentators go on to argue that the words *yaf qahu qauli* show that all that Musa prayed for was that he might be made fluent only to the extent his words may be understood by the people he was to address. Therefore, his prayer was answered only to that extent. Musa limited his own request and some hindrance of speech still remained. Otherwise he too would have been made thoroughly eloquent!

Such hair-splitting is unnecessary. At the time when Allah was showering his blessings on Musa, would it have become him to start bargaining with his Benefactor? All that Musa needed was a loosening of the knot of his tongue to the extent that he might carry out his mission. In seeking his brother's assistance there was a secret which only Allah and he appreciated.

¹⁷ Qasas ul Anbiya, pp: 208-,209.

وَهَلْ أَتَكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى () إِذْ رَأَى نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ
 نَارًا لَعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجِدُ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى () فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا
 نُودِيَ بِمُوسَى () إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ ۗ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ
 طُوًى () وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَى () إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا
 فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي () إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا
 لِتُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا تَسْعَى () فَلَا يَصُدُّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لِيُؤْمِنُ
 بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَتَرْدَى () (طه ع ١)

"Hath there come unto thee the story of Musa when he saw a fire and said unto his folk: Wait! Lo! I see a fire afar off. Peradventure I may bring you a brand or find guidance at the fire.

And when he reached it, he was called by name, O Musa!

Lo! I, even I, am thy Lord, so take off thy shoes for thou art in the holy valley of Tuwa.

And I have chosen thee, so hearken unto that which is inspired. Lo! I, even I, am Allah. there is no God save Me, So serve Me and establish worship for My remembrance.

Lo! The hour is surely coming, but I will to keep it hidden that every soul may be rewarded for that which it striveth (to achieve).

Therefore, let not him turn thee aside from (the thought of) it who believeth not therein but followeth his own desire, lest thou perish." (Taha: Verses 9-16)

إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا ۖ سَاتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ آتِيكُمْ
 بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ () فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا نُودِيَ أَنْ بُورِكَ
 مَنْ فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا ۖ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ () يُمُوسَى إِنَّهُ
 أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ () (النمل ع ١)

"When Musa said unto his household, Lo! I spy afar off a fire. I will bring you tidings thence or bring to you a borrowed flame that you may warm yourselves.

But when he reached it, he was called, saying: Blessed is He whosoever is in the Fire and whosoever is round about it! And glorified be Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

O Musa! It is I, Allah, the Mighty, the Wise.

(al Namal: Verse 7 - 9)

وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يَا مُوسَى () قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ أَتَوَكَّؤُا عَلَيْهَا وَ
أَهْشُ بِهَا عَلَى غَنَمِي وَلِيَ فِيهَا مَآرِبُ أُخْرَى () قَالَ أَلْقِهَا يَا مُوسَى ()
فَالْقَهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَى () قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ ۗ سَنُعِيدُ
هَا سِيرَتَهَا الْأُولَى () وَاضْمُمْ يَدَكَ إِلَى جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَاءَ مِ
غَيْرِ سُوءٍ آيَةً أُخْرَى () لِنُرِيكَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا الْكُبْرَى () (طه ع ١)

And the Voice asked:

“O Musa! What is that in thy right hand?”

He said, This is my staff whereon I lean and wherewith I break down branches for my sheep, and wherein I find other uses.

He said, Cast it down, O Musa!

So he cast it down, and lo! it was a serpent gliding!

He said, Grasp it and fear not. We shall return it to its former state.

And thrust thy hand within thy armpit; it will come forth white, without hurt. (That will be) another token.

That We may show thee some of Our greater portents.

(Ta'ha 17-23)

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الْغَرْبِيِّ إِذْ قَضَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى الْأَمْرَ وَمَا كُنْتَ مِنَ
الشَّاهِدِينَ () وَلَكِنَّا أَنشَأْنَا قُرُونًا فَتَطَاوَلَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ ۗ وَمَا كُنْتَ
تَأْوِيًا فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ تَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا ۗ وَلَكِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ () وَمَا
كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الطُّورِ إِذْنَا دِينَا وَلَكِن رَّحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا
آتَاهُمْ مِّن نَّذِيرٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ () (قصص ع ٥)

And thou (Muhammed) wast not on the western side (of the Mount) when we expounded unto Musa the commandments, and thou wast not among those present.

But We brought forth generations, and their lives dragged on for them. And thou wast not a dweller in Midian, reciting unto them Our revelations, but We kept sending (messengers to men).

And thou wast not beside the Mount when We did call, but the knowledge of it is a mercy from thy Lord that thou mayest warn a folk unto whom no warner came before thee, that haply they give heed. (Qasas 44-46)

هَلْ أَتَكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى () إِذْ نَادَهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ()
 إِذْهَبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَى أَنْ تَزَكَّى ()
 وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَى () (النازعات)

"Hath there come unto thee the history of Musa.

How his Lord called him in the holy vale of Tuwa,

Saying: Go thou unto Pharaoh. Lo! He hath rebelled.

And say (unto him) Hast thou (will) to grow (in grace)?

Then I shall guide thee to thy Lord and thou shall fear (Him)." (al Naziaat)

إِذْهَبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى () قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي ()
 وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي () وَأَحْلِلْ عُقْدَةَ مِنِّ لِسَانِي () يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي ()
 وَاجْعَلْ لِي وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِي () هَرُونَ أَخِي () اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرِي ()
 وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي أَمْرِي () كَيْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيرًا () وَنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيرًا ()
 إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا () قَالَ قَدْ أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يَا مُوسَى ()

(طه ع ٢)

Go both of Pharaoh; he hath transgressed (the bounds). Musa said, 'My Lord, open out for me my hearst; And ease for me my task; And loose the knot of my tongue; that they understand my speech; And grant me a helper from my

family—Haroon my brother; Increase my strength with him; And make him share my task; That we may glorify Thee much; And remember Thee much; 'Thou possessest full knowledge of us.' God said, "Granted is thy prayer, O Moses!. Lo! He hath transgressed (the bounds).

(Ta'ha 25-37)-

إِذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِآيَاتِي وَلَا تَنِيَّافِي ذِكْرِي () إِذْهَبَا إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ
إِنَّهُ طَغَى () فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَيْنًا لَعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى () قَالَ رَبَّنَا
إِنَّا نَخَافُ أَنْ يُفْرِطَ عَلَيْنَا أَوْ أَنْ يَطْغَى () قَالَ لَاتَخَافَا إِنِّي مَعَكُمَا
أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَى () فَاتِيَهُ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولَا رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ () وَكَاتِبَهُمْ قَدْ جِئْنَاكَ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ مَنْ
اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى () (طه ع ٢)

Go thou and thy brother with my tokens and be not faint in remembrance of Me. Go both of you unto Pharaoh. Lo! he hath transgressed (the bounds). And speak unto him a gentle word that peradventure he may heed or fear.

They said, Our Lord! Lo! We fear that he may be beforehand with us or that he may play the tyrant.

He said, Fear not. Lo! I am with you twain, Hearing seeing. So go ye unto him and say: Lo! We are two messengers of thy Lord. So let the Children of Israel go with us and torment them not. We bring thee a token from thy Lord. And peace will be for him who followeth the right guidance.

(Ta'ha 44-48.)

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَا مَعَهُ أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ وَزِيرًا () فَقُلْنَا
إِذْهَبَا إِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَدَمَّرْنَاهُمْ تَدْمِيرًا ()

(فرقان ع ٤)

We verily gave Musa the Scripture and placed with him his brother Haroon as henchman. Then we said, Go together unto the folk who have denied Our revelations. Then We destroyed them, a complete destruction. (al Furqan : 35-36)

وَأَذْنَادِي رَبُّكَ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَنْتِ الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ () قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ
 الْآيَتُونَ () قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَذِّبُونِ ه وَيَضِيقُ صَدْرِي
 وَلَا يَنْطَلِقُ لِسَانِي فَأَرْسِلْ إِلَىٰ هَارُونَ ه وَلَهُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَنْبٍ فَأَخَافُ أَنْ
 يَقْتُلُونِ ه قَالَ كَلَّا فَاذْهَبَا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُسْتَمِعُونَ ه فَاتِيَا
 فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ () (الشعراء ع ٢)

And when thy Lord called unto Musa, saying, Go unto the wrong-doing folk, the folk of Pharaoh. Will they not ward off (evil)?

He said, My Lord I fear that they will deny me. And I shall be embarrassed, and my tongue will not speak plainly, therefor send for Haroon to help me. And they have a crime against me, so I fear that they will kill me.

He said, Nay, verily. So go you twain with Our tokens. Lo! We shall be with you, hearing.

And come together unto Pharaoh and say, Lo! We bear a message of the Lord of the Worlds. (Shuara: 10 - 16)

وَأَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ۖ فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّىٰ مُدَبِّرًا ۖ وَلَمْ يَعْقِبْ
 مُوسَىٰ لَأَ تَخَفْ ۗ إِنِّي لَأَخَافُ لَدَى الْمُرْسَلُونَ () إِيَّاكَ ظَلَمْتُ ثُمَّ
 بَدَّلَ حُسْنًا ۖ بَعْدَ سُوءٍ فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ () وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ
 تَخْرُجُ بَيْضًا ۖ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ
 كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ () (النمل ع ١)

And throw down thy staff. But when he saw it writhing as it were a demon he turned to flee headlong. (But it was said unto him)

O Musa! Fear not!! Lo! The emissaries fear not in My presence, save him who hath done wrong and afterward hath changed evil for good. And Lo! I am Forgiving, Merciful.

And put thy hand into the bosom of thy robe. It will come forth white but unhurt. (This will be one) among nine tokens unto Pharaoh and his people. Lo! They were ever evil-living folk. (al Namal: 9-12)

فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَجَلَ وَسَارَ بِأَهْلِهِ آنَسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَارًا ۗ
 قَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا لَّعَلِّي آتِيكُمُ مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ جَذْوَةٍ
 مِنَ النَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ () فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ
 الْوَادِ الْأَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبْرَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ أَنْ يَمُوسَى إِنِّي أَنْتَ اللَّهُ
 رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ () وَأَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ۗ فَلَمَّا رآهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّى
 مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ ۗ يَمُوسَى أَقْبِلْ وَلَا تَخَفْ ۗ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْآمِنِينَ ()
 أَسْأَلُكَ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجُ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ ۗ وَاضْمُمُ إِلَيْكَ
 جَنَاحَكَ مِنَ الرَّهْبِ ۗ فَذَلِكَ بِرُءُوسِ رَبِّكَ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ ۗ
 إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ () قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي قَتَلْتُ مِنْهُمْ نَفْسًا فَأَخَافُ
 أَنْ يَقْتُلُونِ () وَأَخِي هَارُونُ هُوَ أَفْصَحُ مِنِّي لِسَانًا فَأَرْسَلْهُ مَعِيَ رِدْآءًا
 يُصَدِّقُنِي إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَذِّبُونِ () قَالَ سَنَشُدُّ عَضُدَكَ بِأَخِيكَ
 وَنَجْعَلُ لَكَ مَلَأْنَا فَلَا يَصِلُونَ إِلَيْكُمَا ۗ بِإِذْنَاءِ أَتَمَّا وَمَنْ
 اتَّبَعَكُمَا الْغَالِبُونَ ()

(قصص ع ٤)

"Then when Musa had fulfilled the term, and was travelling with his housefolk, he saw in the distance a fire and said unto his housefolk: Bide ye here. Lo! I see in the distance a fire; peradventure I shall bring unto you tidings thence, or a brand from the fire that you may warm yourselves.

And when he reached it he was called from the right side of the valley in the blessed field, from the tree. O Musa! I am Allah the Lord of the Worlds!

Throw down thy staff; And when he saw it writhing as it had been a demon, he turned to flee headlong (and it was said unto him), O Musa draw nigh and fear not. Lo! Thou art of those who are secure.

Thrust thy hand in the bosom of thy robe, it will come forth white without hurt. And guard thy heart from fear. Then these shall be two proofs from your Lord unto Pharaoh and his chiefs. Lo! They are evil-living folk.

He said: My Lord! , Lo! I killed a man among them and I fear that they will kill me.

My brother is more eloquent than me in speech. Therefore send him with me as a helper, to confirm me. Lo! I fear that they will taketh me a liar.

He said: We will strengthen thine arm with thy brother and We will give you both power so that they cannot reach you for Our portents: Ye twain and those who follow you, will be the winners." (al Qasas: 29-35)

وَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ آلَا تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْ دُونِي وَكَيْلًا () ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا ()

(بنی اسرائیل ع ۱)

"We gave unto Musa the Scripture, and We appointed it a guidance for the Children of Israel, saying, Choose no guardian beside Me;

(They were) the seed of those We carried (in the ship) alongwith Noah. Lo! He was a grateful slave!

(Bani Israil:2-3)

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَلَاتُكُنْ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَائِهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ () وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةً يَهْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ () إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ()

(سجده)

"And We gave unto Musa the Scripture, so be not of doubt concerning meeting Him, and We appointed him to guide the Children of Israel, and We sent unto them apostles who showed them the way by Our command, as long they showed patience and believed Our revelations. Lo! Thy Lord it is Who will decide on the Last Day wherein they used to differ.) (Sajda)

In these verses the staff of Musa as a miracle or sign is mentioned in different words. In Surah e Taha, the words are *hayyatun tas'aa*, in Namal, al Qasas, *Jan-nun*, and in Shuara, *Su'-ban-un mobin*. Commentators say that although the words are different, they are descriptive of the same thing in its different

conditions. As a specie it was a serpent or *Hayyah*; as one rapid of movement, it was *Jann*, and as one of large dimensions, it was a python or *Sou'baan*.

Stating both miracles, the words in al Qasas mention a fear. The question is what kind of fear or fear of what?

وَاضْمُمْ إِلَيْكَ جَنَاحَكَ مِنَ الرَّهْبِ

Shah Sahab Dehlavi thinks that the “fear” relates to that of the reptile.¹⁸

Other scholars think that “fear” refers to that of Pharaoh’s court. That is, should fear be felt while addressing Pharaoh, Musa need only press his arm against his body and the fear would disappear, giving place to reassurance and peace. No other miracle than the two is mentioned. A psychological cure was advised, usually successful; and since it was proposed by Allah Himself, there was no room left for doubt.¹⁹

Najjaar’s opinion seems to be too far fetched, and we agree with Shah Abdul Qadir.

Pharaoh’s court and the Invitation to Truth

After the preliminary conversation between the brothers, both decided that they should go to Pharaoh and present their case and the Word of Allah to him.

Some scholars state that when Musa and Haroon were stepping out to go, their mother advised them not to do so because the man was both king and a tyrant, but they told her that this was Allah’s command which could not be refused and that Allah had promised that they would succeed.

When these two prophets of Allah arrived at the palace they went into Pharaoh’s court without let or hindrance, and coming near the throne, announced the reason for their visit

“O Pharaoh!” they said, “Allah has sent us as His prophets and messenger to thee. We have only two things to ask of thee? First, that thou believe in Allah and associate no partners with Him; and, second, that thou renounce thy ways of tyranny and liberate the people of Israel from slavery. This is no false claim, nor can we dare to tell a lie in respect of Allah. Our words are proof of our truth, but, further, Allah has equipped us with two signs. It is, therefore,

¹⁸ Mauzah ul Qur’an

¹⁹ Qasas ul Anbiya from Najjar, p. 212

incumbent upon thee to accept our message, and free the Israelis and let them go with us, so that we may take them to the land of the prophets where they might worship only the One True Allah. This is the right path and the way of our forefathers!"

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَفْرَعُونَ إِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ () حَقِيقٌ عَلَيَّ
أَنْ لَّا أَقُولَ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ - قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بَيْنَةً مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَارْسِلْ
مَعِيَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ () (اعراف ع ١٣)

"Musa said, O Pharaoh! Lo! I am a messenger from the Lord of the Worlds, approved upon condition that I speak nothing but the truth. I come unto you (lords of Egypt) with a clear proof from your Lord. So let the Children of Israel go with me."
(al A'raaf: 104, 105)

Hearing these words, Pharaoh replied; "Today you come to me posing as a prophet to free the Children of Israel, have you forgotten the time when you were brought up in my house, and have you forgotten that you killed an Egyptian, and then you ran away?"

Musa said: "It is true that I lived in the royal palace for a long time, and I also admit that quite unintentionally I killed a man by mistake and I went away out of fear. But is it not a marvel of Allah's mercy that in the midst of great misery I was brought up in thy house, and then, having grown up, I was blessed by Allah and appointed as His Prophet?"

Will it be justice that in compensation for bringing up one Israeli, thou shouldst enslave all the Israelis?"

فَاتِيَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ () أَنْ أَرْسِلَ مَعَنَا بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ () قَالَ أَلَمْ نُرَبِّكَ فِينَا وَلِيدًا وَلَبِثْتَ فِينَا مِنْ عُمُرِكَ سِنِينَ ()
وَفَعَلْتَ فَعَلْتِكَ الَّتِي فَعَلْتَ وَأَنْتَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ () قَالَ فَعَلْتَهَا
إِذَاوَأَنَا مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ () فَفَرَرْتُ مِنْكُمْ لَمَّا خِفْتُمْ فَوَهَبَ لِي رَبِّي
حُكْمًا وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ () وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَيَّ أَنْ
عَبَدتَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ () (شعراء ع ٢)

And come together unto Pharaoh and say: Lo! We bear a message of the Lord of the Worlds: (saying). Let the

Children of Israel go with us'

*Pharaoh said: Did we not rear thee among us as a child?
And thou didst dwell many years of thy life among us??*

*And didst that thy deed which thou didst, and thou wast one
of the ingrates."*

*He said: I did it then when I was of those who are astray.
Then I fled from you when I feared you, and my Lord gave
me a command, and appointed me (of the number) of those
sent (by Him).*

*And this is the past wherewith thou reproachest me that thou
has enslaved the Children of Israel." (al Shu-ara 16 -22)*

The words *tilka nia'matun* have been translated here according to the general commentaries. But, to the contrary, Abdul Wahab Najjar takes their meaning to be: "It will be thy reward to me and thine obligation that you grant honour to the Children of Israel, that you let them go with me and they may be free to worship Allah as they wish."

In support of this contention, Najjar states that *abadta* is synonymous with *karramta*. He refers to Arabic lexicons for his authority. The Lisan ul Arab, vol 4, p 263, gives *al-mabud* as meaning *al-mukarram*.

It is necessary, he says, to take this meaning here because the Qur'an very clearly states that Allah advised Musa to speak gently with Pharaoh; and not express any anger or harsh language. It was not, then, possible for Musa to speak in tone and language otherwise.

Najjar says that the meaning, the general run of commentators have taken is full of sarcasm and criticism.²⁰

But whatever Najjar says in this connection is no more than unnecessary exposition. In Musa's language there is neither taunt nor reproach nor contention: nothing but plain, simple expatiation so that Pharaoh may turn his attention to his wrong ways, his cruelty and his pride. Such admonition is the duty of every prophet.

Pharaoh ridiculed Musa's claim to be a prophet and began to talk about his personal life. Pharaoh reminded him of the obligation he owed to the royal family and tried to intimidate him by alluding to the manslaughter of an Egyptian. But Musa having been reassured by Allah was neither afraid nor angry. He acknowledged his debt to Pharaoh's household, and confessed his

²⁰ Qasas ul Ambiya Arabi p 216

unintentional crime, but with it also presented his argument that all this did not justify the enslavement of all Israel; people. Musa also gave proof of his missionary call which made Pharaoh, indeed, speechless. Without any display of anger, Pharaoh changed his subject of conversation, and began asking questions about the Lord of the Worlds.

The commentary and translation of the commentators is, therefore, correct. Najjar's version disparages the whole narrative and is also inconsistent with the context.

Discussion on the Lord Allah of Providence

When Musa had announced before Pharaoh that he was sent by the Lord of All Worlds, and Pharaoh ridiculed the very idea, the philosophy troubling his mind was that, according to the Egyptian faith, he, himself was god, reincarnation of Ra²¹ the sun-god, title Pharaoh derived from this name, and looking after the universe was assigned to him.

Pharaoh said that it was he and his household that had been providential to Musa. How then could any other be Providential Lord for him?

"This is something very new", he said. "If you are correct, give us some details about him."

Musa replied, "If you have faith and capacity for the truth, understand that He Whom I call Lord of All is that Holy Being Who possesses the power of providence of the skies and the earth and of all that is between them. Pharaoh, can you claim that it is you who created the skies and the earth and all that is between them? Is it in your power to provide for them.

If it is not in your power, ---and it certainly is not ---, then why do you deny Allah as the Providential Power?"

Hearing these words, Pharaoh turned to his courtiers, and said, "Do you hear what he says?"

Ignoring Pharaoh's astonishment and that of his courtiers, Musa continued his speech:

"The Lord of the Worlds is that Being Whose providence affects your

²¹ Egyptians worshipped many gods. Some were deities of different tribes and clans, such as Nifat, Fata and Maat and some of the powers that govern the universe -- Ozerus, god of the last-day world, Miyaorat god of the skies, Kimnu, maker of the bodies, Eziru goddess of souls, Tutu prescriber of age, Horus, reliever from pain, Hathu the cow, provider of food, and the greatest of them Aaman Ra the sun-god. Divinity of kings was fully entrenched in the Egyptian mind. The title Phara was derived from Ra, name of the sun-god, and the king was looked upon as reincarnation of Ra.

existence and that of your forefathers. When you were nothing. He created you and nourished you, and likewise, He created your father and forefathers and nourished them."

When Pharaoh heard this irrefutable argument, he turned to his courtiers and said, "This man who styles himself as Allah's emissary is mad."

Musa seeing that Pharaoh was unable to give a proper reply, made his words more appealing: "He Whom I call Allah is Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them? A little commonsense would convince you of this truth."

In short, ignoring Pharaoh's contemptuous and insane language Musa, as Allah had commanded, continued talking in gentle tones and words, trying to show Pharaoh and the others the path of truth, and performing his duty as a prophet.

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ () قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا
 بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ () قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهُ أَلَا تَسْتَمِعُونَ () قَالَ
 رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأُولِينَ قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمْ الَّذِي أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ
 لَمَجْنُونٌ () قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
 تَعْقِلُونَ () (شعراء ع ٢)

Pharaoh said: And what is the Lord of the worlds?

Musa said: Lord of heavens and the earth and all that is between them. If you had but sure belief.

Pharaoh said unto those around him: Hear ye not?

He said: Your Lord and the Lord of your fathers,

Pharaoh said: Lo! Your messenger who hath been sent unto you is, indeed, a madman.

He said: Lord of the east and the west and all that is between them, if you did but understand. (Shu-ara: 23-28)

Once again Musa reminded Pharaoh that the path he was treading on was not the right one. Only the Lord of the Worlds was worthy of worship and to associate partners with Him was blatant *shyrik*. "O Pharaoh!" Musa advised:

"Renounce your ways because the Lord of the Worlds has inspired me to say that whoever disbelieves my message of truth shall deserve punishment from Him."

إِنَّا قَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْنَا أَنَّ الْعَذَابَ عَلَى مَنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ()

"I have been inspired that great punishment is for him who rebels."

Pharaoh repeated his question, "Who is the Lord of you two?"

Once again Pharaoh changed the subject when Musa replied in words that made him speechless. This is the usual way of debators who when they lose an argument and cannot give a right answer, turn the topic to another direction.

Musa answered: "Our Lord is that same Lord Who created this world and all that is in it; Who provided everyone and everything with its peculiar qualities and powers to open the road of life on them; Who providing all with their peculiar talents, showed them the path to the highest stage."

Now Pharaoh again changed: "What happened to the old generations?"

What he meant was to say that if Musa's contention was right, were the people of old under punishment now whose faith was opposed to that of Musa?

Musa understood that Pharaoh wanted to complicate the real issue. He immediately answered: "Knowledge thereof is only with my Lord Who never forgets nor is ever mistaken."

That is, "What happened to them or how Allah treated the matter is not my responsibility nor yours. But it might be added, that Allah never forgets. Whatever He does is never wrong nor cruel or unjust."

Musa returned to his main topic so as to reinforce his truth about the virtues of Allah.

قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمْ يَا مُوسَى () قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَلْقَهُ
ثُمَّ هَدَى () قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُونِ الْأُولَى () قَالَ عَلِمْنَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي فِي
كَيْبِهِ لَّا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى () الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا
وَسَلَّكَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا
مِّنْ نُّبَاتٍ شَتَّى () كُلُّوا وَارْعَوْا أَنْعَامَكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّأُولِي النَّهْيِ () مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ
تَارَةً أُخْرَى () (طه ع ٣)

Pharaoh said: Who, then, is the Lord of you twain, O Musa?
He said Our Lord is He Who gave unto everything in nature,
He guided it aright.

He said: What then is the state of the generation of old?

He said, the knowledge thereof is with my Lord .in a Record . My Lord neither erreth nor forgeteth. Who hath appointed the earth as a bed and hath threaded roads for you therein and hath sent down water from the sky and thereby We have brought forth diverse kinds of vegetation. (saying) Eat ye and feed your cattle. Lo! therein verily are portents for men of thought.

Thereof We created you and thereunto We return you, and thence We bring you forth a second time. (Ta'ha: 49 -55)

A well known contemporary Alim of India has criticised the commentators for not appreciating the spirit of the verse of the Qur'an under consideration and translating the word *huda* in Surah e Ta'ha as *hidayat* 'guidance of religion'; as if he were the first to have appreciated that spirit, although, except a few, both old and modern commentators have taken the same meaning claimed to be original.²²

Contemporary ulema say that Haroon used to interpret the dialogue between Musa and Pharaoh and with great eloquence and lucidity explained the arguments put forward by Musa.

There were several such meetings between Musa and Pharaoh. Although the truthful arguments of Musa and Haroon would disturb Pharaoh very considerably, since he had no answer finally to give ; he had no alternative but to get speechless and, therefore, could receive no light from Musa. He knew that the base of his being god and providence was so weak that if confronted with the truth of the words of Musa it would break up like a spider's web. The courtiers too realised this.

Pharaoh found such a state of affairs intolerable. In a realm where he was looked upon as both king and god, his awe was overpowering. The daring of Musa and Haroon caused him great anxiety. He, therefore, thought of putting an end to arguments, and decided to show his strength and power and rouse his subjects against Musa and Haroon and virtually declared war against Allah the High. Turning to the chiefs of his people, he said:

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي ۗ

(قصص ع ٤)

²²

تم هجى الى طريق الانتفاع والارتفاق بما اعطاه وعرفه كيف يتوصل الى بقائه وكماله اما اختياراً كما فى الحيوانات
او طبعاً كما فى الجماد (الخ) (روح المعانى جلد ١٦ ص ١٨٣)

And Pharaoh said, O chiefs! I know of no god other than myself.

And, then, turning to one of his ministers, ordered:

فَاَوْقِدْ لِي يَا هَامَانَ عَلَى الطِّينِ فَاجْعَلْ لِي صَرْحًا لَعَلِّي اطَّلِعُ إِلَى إِلِهِ
مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ () (قصص ع ٤)

So kindle for me (a fire), O Haman, to bake the mud and set up for me a lofty tower in order that I may survey the God of Musa, and lo! I deem him of the liars. (Qasas: 38)

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هَامَانُ ابْنِ لِي صَرْحًا لَعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ () أَسْبَابَ
السَّمَوَاتِ فَأَطَّلِعَ إِلَى إِلِهِ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ كَاذِبًا، وَكَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ
لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءَ عَمَلِهِ وَصُدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ () وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ إِلَّا
فِي تَبَابٍ () (المومن ع ٤)

And Pharaoh said: O Haman!; Build for me a tower that haply I may reach the roads --- the roads of the heavens and may look upon the God of Musa, though verily I think him a liar. Thus was the evil he did made fair-seeming unto Pharaoh, and he was debarred from the(right) way. The plot of Pharaoh ended but in ruin!. (al Momin 36-37).

Shah Abdul Qadir writes in *Mauza ul Qur'an* that from the verse *alim-tu lakum min ilah-in ghayri*, it appears that Pharaoh was an agnostic. The historical references made in history books and commentaries also seem to indicate that the Egyptians worshipped certain deities, the biggest of them being Amman Ra and had no concept of Allah the One in any sense whatever. The affairs of the universe were looked upon as being in the hands of stars and those deities. Their faith was, probably, akin to that of the Jains of India, who deny Allah but worship several deities.

HAMAN

The Qur'an does not tell us who Haman was or what was his official status, if any or what his position in Pharaoh's court was. Nor are we told whether Haman built a tower or what Pharaoh did after he climbed up its stairs. Such details were unnecessary for the purpose.

The Old Testament too does not make any such mention, not even Pharaoh's command for any building of a tower. But commentators have quoted a story

that after Haman had completed the tower, a very lofty one, Pharaoh climbed up and shot an arrow towards the sky, but by Allah's command, the arrow, smeared with blood, returned. Seeing this, Pharaoh announced to the Egyptians: "Do you see? I have disposed of the Allah of Musa."

Although Pharaoh used this subterfuge to conceal his weakness, he knew that it was all a fraud, and no one could be truly convinced in his heart. It is possible that many Egyptians also thought in a similar way, but there was not one among them, courtiers or others, who possessed the courage to proclaim his conviction and open the door to the acceptance of Truth.

Pharaoh sensed that in the tussle between truth and falsehood the danger to himself and his position was increasing day by day, and, therefore, tried to intimidate Musa so as to force him to renounce his mission. He threatened him bluntly: "If you hold any one as Allah beside me, I will have you thrown into prison."

قَالَ لَئِنِ اتَّخَذْتَ إِهًّا غَيْرِي لَأَجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُورِينَ ()

(شعراء ع ٢)

"Pharaoh said: If thou chooseth a god other than me, I assuredly shall place thee among the prisoners."

(Sh-u-ara : 22)

Musa replied, "Shall I adopt your wrong path even though I come from the One True Allah with irrefutable signs?"

Pharaoh said:, "If you are speaking the truth, let us see some of your signs."

قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جئتَ بآيةٍ فأتِ بها إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ()

(اعراف)

Pharaoh said: If thou comest with signs from thy, God and art truthful, then show us some sign."

(al-Aaraaf)

Musa advanced a few steps and threw his staff on the ground, and forthwith the staff assumed the shape and form of a python. This was no deception of vision but a reality.

Then Musa thrust his hand through his shirt into his armpit and drew it out, and it was shining like a star. This was the second sign or miracle.

When the Egyptian courtiers saw their king being so humbled they were agitated and shouted that this man, Musa, was a great magician, who by this trickery wished to overcome the Egyptian people & drive everyone of them

out of their country. Therefore, they should think carefully on their plan of action.

It was decided after due consultation that Musa and his brother should be left free for the time being, and meanwhile magicians from all over the realm should be summoned to compete with Musa, who, they thought was certain to be defeated in the encounter. That would put an end to his ambitions.

Pharaoh said to Musa: "We understand very well that by this subterfuge you want to turn us out of this land of ours, and we have decided to summon our magicians to show you down; so appoint a day on which you shall meet them. Then neither you shall break the tryst nor we."

Musa said, "Let the day of the festival be the day after the sun has risen high; let us gather in the field."

فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ () وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ
لِلنَّاطِرِينَ () قَالَ الْمَلَأِينَ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسَاحِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ()
يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ () قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ
وَأَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ () يَا تَوَكُّبِكُمْ لِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ ()
(اعراف ع ١٤)

Then he flung down his staff, and lo! it was a serpent manifest;

And he drew forth his hand from his bosom, and lo! it was white for the beholders.

The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said, Lo! This is some knowing wizard who would expel you from your land. Now what do you advise?

They said. Put him off (for a while), --- him and his brother - -- and send into the city summoners to bring each known wizard unto thee." (A'raaf : 107-112)

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ بِآيَاتِنَا
فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُجْرِمِينَ () فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا
قَالُوا إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ () قَالَ مُوسَى أَتَقُولُونَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا

جَاءَكُمْ سِحْرٌ هَذَا وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّحِرُونَ () قَالُوا أَجْتَنَّا لِتُلْفِتَنَا
عَمَّا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا وَتَكُونَ لَكُمْ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا
نَحْنُ لَكُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ () وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ اتَّبِعْنِي يَكُفَّ سِحْرَ عَلَيْهِم ()

(يونس ع ٨)

"Then after them We sent Musa and Haroon unto Pharaoh and his chiefs with our revelations, but they were arrogant and were a guilty folk.

And when truth from Our presence came unto them, they said: This is mere magic.

Musa said, Speak you (so) of the Truth when it hath come unto you? Is this magic? Now, magicians thrive not.

They said, Hast thou come unto us to pervert us from that (faith) in which we found our fathers, and that you two may own the place of greatness in the land? We will not believe you two.

And Pharaoh said: Bring every cunning wizard unto me."

(Yunus: 75-79)

قَالَ أَجْتَنَّا لِنُخْرِجَنَّكَ مِنْ أَرْضِنَا بِسِحْرِكَ يَا مُوسَى () فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَكَ بِسِحْرٍ
مِثْلِهِ فَأَجْعَلْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَأُنْخَلِفَهُ، نَحْنُ وَلَا أَنْتَ مَكَانًا
سَوِيًّا () قَالَ مَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمَ الزَّيْنَةِ وَأَنْ يُخَشِرَ النَّاسُ ضُحًى ()

(طه ع ٣)

He said Hast thou come to drive us out from our land by thy magic, O Musa? But we surely can produce magic the like thereof : so appoint a tryst between us and you, which neither we nor you shall fail to keep at a place convenient (to us both).

Musa said: Your tryst shall be the day of the feast, and let the people assemble when the sun hath risen high."

(Ta'ha: 57-59)

The day of the feast being appointed, Pharaoh sent orders to his officers far and near to send well-known expert magicians in the realm to the metropolis as soon as possible.

Najjar Misri thinks that by the 'festival day' was meant the one called *Wafa ul Neil*, because this was the biggest of the Egyptian festivals.

(*Qasas ul Anmbiya*)

According to Egyptian history the period of the advent of Musa was one in which magic was looked upon as a special department of knowledge. For this reason the status of magicians was held very high. They had easy access to the royal court, and they were consulted at times of war and peace, and birth and death for drawing up of horoscopes, even in religious matters. Parchments lately recovered from the pyramids confirm this.

One of the many mistakes of ancient peoples was that they looked upon magic as part of religion. For this reason, as proved by the history of Babylon, Egypt, China and India, they learnt and taught magic and made innovations and changes in the subject.

This was the reason why Egyptian people easily believed that Musa was a magician and he should be made to face the more powerful magicians of the realm. Musa being in possession of Divine assurance was certain that he could not possibly be humbled by any magician, and so he welcomed the opportunity which would bring him out victorious; Allah's magic would triumph and everyone would have to bow down to the truth without any alternative but to confess their submission. No one henceforth would dare open his lips against the religion of truth and obstruct his mission.

Sahar or magic ---

Sahar literally means "that which is hidden". Early morning is *sahar* because it is a time when daylight is not fully out and there still is some darkness. In the search for knowledge, the word implies such matters the cause of the existence of which is hidden from the eyes or is not visible at first sight.

اعلم ان لفظ السحر في عرف الشرع مختص بكل امر يخفى سببه

ويتخيل على غير حقيقة (الخ)

Let it be clearly understood that in the phraseology of shariah, the word sahar is reserved for a matter the cause of which is hidden, and comes as a thought contrary to the reality."

(*Tafsir e Kabir vol. 1 p. 420*)

Does *sahar* have some reality at all or is it merely deception of the eyes?

Most sunni ulema believe that *sahar* is a reality but possessing harmful effects. Out of His supreme wisdom, Allah has placed injurious effects in *sahar* just as He Has in poison and injurious medicines, not that by itself it

has the power to ignore Allah's natural laws and be effective. Such a belief would be *kufr*.

Imam Abu Hanifa, Abu Bakar Jasas, Abu Ishaq Isphahani Shafa'i, Allama Ibn Hazm Zahiri say that *sahar* is nothing but jugglery and deception of the eyes. Abu Bakar Razi states:

ومتى اطلق فها سم لكل امرٍ مُموّه باطلٍ لا حقيقة له ولا ثبات

"When the word sahar is used without qualifying it, it means something that is no more than a deceit and vanity, that has neither reality nor endurance."

(Ahkam ul Qur'an Vol 1 p.48)

Hafiz Imaduddin Ibn Kathir writes:

وقد ذكر الوزير ابوالمظفر يحيى بن محمد بن هبيرة في كتابه
"الإضراف في مذهب الأشراف" بأبافى السحر فقال اجمعوا على
ان السحر له حقيقة الا با حنيفة فانه قال لا حقيقة له، عنده -

"Vazir. Abul Muzaffar Yahya b. Muhammed b. Habira has reserved one chapter in his book Al Ashraf fi Mazhab ul Ashraf, where he states that ulema are agreed that sahar, like other realities has a reality, but Imam Abu Hanifa says that it is no reality at all" (Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol. 1 p. 147)

قال ابو عبد الله القرطبي وعندنا ان السحر حق وله حقيقة ويخلق
الله عنده ما يشاء خلافا للمعتزلة وابي اسحق الاسفرائيني من
الشافعية حيث قالوا انه تمويه او تخيل (الخ)

"Abu Abdulla Qurtabi says, that sahar does have reality and by its means Allah creates whatever He wills to create. But of the motazila and Shuvafa'.., Abu Ishaq Asfaraini is opposed to this view and says that sahar is nothing but a name for hypnotism and deceit of vision."

(Tafsir e Ibn e Kathir vol. 1 p. 147)

Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani:

واختلف في السحر ف قيل هو تخيل فقط ولا حقيقة له، وهذا
اختيار ابي جعفر الاسترابادى من الشافعية و ابي بكر الرازى من

الحنفية وابن حزم الظاهري وطائفة قال النووي والصحيح ان له حقيقة وبه قطع الجمهور وعليه عامة العلماء -

"There are differences over sahar, whether it is nothing but imagination, without any reality. This is the belief of Abu Jafar Shafai, Abu Bakar Razi Hanfi, Ibn Hazm and a small group. But Noodi says the correct view is that sahar is a reality like so many other realities. The majority believe it and also most ulema." (Fath ul Bari Vol 10 p. 183)

Ulema who look upon sahar as having substance, are split among themselves. Some of them ask whether nature and reality can be revolutionised by sahar? Is its effect limited only to causing hurt or loss? Is it not impossible for a human being to be translated as a horse or an ass into a human being? A small group does believe that sahar has that quality in itself. But the majority believes that such quality is not innate in sahar. Nothing can be changed in its being what it is by sahar. At this stage sahar is no more than hypnotism or jugglery.

Hafiz Ibn Hajar writes:

لكن محل النزاع هل يقع بالسحر انقلاب عين اولاً فمن قال انه تخيل فقط منع ذلك ومن قال ان له حقيقة اختلفوا هل له تأثير فقط بحيث يغير المزاج فيكون نوعاً من الامراض او ينتهي الى الاحالة بحيث يصير الجماد حيواناً مثلاً وعكسه فالذي عليه الجمهور هو الاول وذهبت طائفة قليلة الى الثاني (الح)

"The argument is whether sahar or magic can change the species. Those who believe that it is nothing but imagination, oppose such belief; and those who hold that sahar has reality differ among themselves, some arguing that sahar is limited to making changes to a certain extent, for example, in temper or temperament, such as various diseases may do, and be counted as, another disease; or does its influence exceed this limit? For instance, turn flora into fauna or vice versa? The majority hold the former view, and a very small group the latter."

(Fath ul Bari vol. 1 p. 184; Ahkam ul Qur'an vol 1, p. 750)

Both Ibn Hajar and Abu Bakar Jasas write that all ulema are agreed, that on the day of festivities the encounter was held, and the show on the part of the wizards was no more than deceit of the imagination. The pieces of rope the wizards threw did not become serpents, but they had been filled with mercury early that morning and a fire was placed below the ground's surface, so when the ropes were thrown on the hot earth, the mercury came into motion creating the illusion that the ropes were writhing and moving like reptiles.²³

In the lexicon meaning of the word *sahar*, Imam Razi includes all those things that are astonishing to common people, hypnotism, charms and amulets, paintings, and scientific inventions. the museums and even eloquent speech.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

إِنَّ مِنَ الْبَيَانَ لَسِحْرًا -

*"Some speeches are, indeed, magical."*²⁴

These last mentioned forms of *sahar* are not even distantly related to those forms which are immoral, misleading or looked upon as kufr.

Sahar and religion --

Muslim jurists hold that magic in which the devils or evil spirits are invoked to grant favours or assistance is totally forbidden and is *shyrk* and he who indulges in such practice is a *kafir*. It is a great sin to do things the motive of which is to cause injury to someone.

In the story of Solomon, the Qur'an says:

وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ -

*"And Solomon disbelieved not (kufr) ,but the devils disbelieved, for, they taught magic to people."*²⁵

We have in a Tradition:

ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال اجْتَنِبُوا الْمُؤَبَقَاتِ الشَّرِكِ
بِاللَّهِ وَالسِّحْرِ

²³ This is the detail of the versions current among the early period ulema. We discontinue the topic here because it takes us away too far from our subject and mentioning it in summary may be more harmful than useful.

²⁴ Bukhari: Bab ul Sahar.

²⁵ Fath ul Bari: Vol 10. p183

*"The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Guard yourselves against fatal deeds, that is, against magic.'"*²⁶

Commenting on Traditions regarding magic, Ibn Hajar argues:

"Noodi says that performance of magic is forbidden and all authorities agree that it is a great sin. The Prophet ﷺ included it among seven deadly things. Some magic is kufr, and some, though not kufr, is yet sinful. If a mantar or chanting of magic is kufr, in practice, it is kufr, not otherwise. But to learn or teach magic is absolutely forbidden."²⁷

Difference between miracle and magic:

The ulema of Islam have always debated on the subject of the difference between magic and miracles. There are several books on the subject, of which Ibn Teemya's *Al-Nabwaat* and Shaykh Mohommed Safarini's *Aqida e Safarini* may specially be mentioned. Here we need only mention the subject briefly in simple words:

The prime miracle of a prophet is that law of guidance which he presents before astray and wanton peoples, that is, the Book of Allah. But just as scholars and other learned people analyse the truth and guidance and truth of the revealed word, similarly the disposition of the world of human beings is such that even for truth people desire such things as are related to the miracles of those who come with the Truth, and which cannot be challenged by any earthly power, because the harbinger of that knowledge bases the criterion of its truth on them.

Therefore, it has been Allah's way to endow His prophets with one or more signs or miracles together with His message and education of truth. When this sign is displayed, and no earthly power can humble it, it is defined as 'miracle'.

And it has also been Allah's way to furnish a prophet with such miracles as are of the category of subjects in which the peoples to whom he is sent, are accomplished. The people must also be familiar with the prophet's character so that they easily understand that the sign or miracle he shows originates from some power above that of human beings. And now if obstinacy and prejudice do not impede, Allah's argument is proved to every individual and he cries out involuntarily:

²⁶ Fath ul Bari Vol. 10 p. 183)

²⁷ Fath ul Bari Vol. 10 p. 183)

” ایں سعادت بزورِ بازو نیست تازہ عطا خدائے عظیمہ “

”This blessing does not come from muscular strength:

Until God the Bestower bestows it on some one.”

A miracle, thus, is Allah's own performance which takes shape to prove the truthfulness of a truthful man. It is not the outcome of any principle rule to be learnt like an art nor is it in the power of a prophet to show it whenever he pleases unless he is challenged to do so by his opponents. At such times the prophet turns to Allah, and Allah gives him the power to display the miracle required.

To the contrary, magic is an art which anyone who has acquired proficiency in it can use at his will. Its media and causes are not known to a layman, but other magicians are familiar.

These are distinguishing features of miracle and magic. As for the effects, a magician's life is one of causing pain, evil deeds and fear and terror and people are afraid of them. But a prophet's life is one of truth and purity and fear of Allah alone; he sympathises with Allah's creatures, his character is spotless. He does not make a profession of miracles; he performs a miracle in the midst of his enemies who already acknowledge his character, but look upon his mission with suspicion or with ridicule and denial. If there is a competition between miracle and magic, the miracle will always be triumph over the magic, however powerful the magic might be. This has been proved by the history of prophets and magicians.

Briefly, then, Musa was equipped with the two miracles of his staff and the shining hand because at that time Egypt was the centre of magic, where the art of magic was at its zenith.

This was necessary so that when the time should come for opponents to cross the limits of obstinate denial, and the prophet be challenged, he might produce something of similar appearance, and vanquish their show of deception, proving that the power he possessed transcended human endeavour. All classes of people would then believe in the truth of his words and whether they acknowledge it openly or not, their general attitude would prove their submission.

THE ENCOUNTER:

Musa and the magicians ---

Soon the grand day of festivities arrived. Pharaoh in all his pomp sits on his throne; the courtiers dressed in their best are there, lined up according to precedence. & thousands are gathered to see the advertised show. On one side

in the centre stands the group of the commandeered magicians with their kit and equipment and on the other, are the two sent ones of Allah, the prophets, in the hands of one whom there is a staff and nothing else.

Pharaoh is cheerfully sanguine, and certain that the wizards will show Musa down, encourages them that if they humble Musa, he would not only reward them generously, but they would also be given special positions in his court, and they, on their part, are rejoicing in their hearts at the bright future awaiting them.

وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِن كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ ()
 قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ()
 (اعراف ع ١٤)

And the wizards came to Pharaoh, saying: Surely, there will be a reward for us, if we are victors.

He answered: Yea, and surely ye shall be of those brought near (to me). (al A'raaf: 113-114)

فَجُمِعَ السَّحَرَةُ لِمِيقَاتٍ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ وَقِيلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ
 مُجْتَمِعُونَ () لَعَلْنَا نَتَّبِعُ السَّحَرَةَ إِن كَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ () فَلَمَّا جَاءَ
 السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوا لِفِرْعَوْنَ أَئِنَّا لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِن كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ () قَالَ
 نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ()
 (شعراء ع ٣)

"So the wizards were gathered together at a set time on a day appointed.

And it was said unto the people, Are you (also) gathering?

They said: Aye, so that we may follow the wizards, if they are the winners.

And when the wizards came, they said unto Pharaoh, Will there surely be a reward for us, if we are the winners?

He said, Aye and ye will then surely be of those brought near (to me). (Shu-ara 38-44)

Thus assured, the wizards turned to Musa, but before they could challenge him, Musa addressed the onlookers, saying, "O people! Your state is to be pitied for what you are doing. By calling us wizards, you are calumniating Allah. I fear lest He punish you for this and uproot your very existence. Whoever calumniates has never prospered."

Hearing these words, the people began to whisper to one another; and the courtiers seeing them, raised their voices to say: "Doubt not that these two brothers are wizards who want to get the better of you so that they may turn you out of your own land". And to the wizards, "Tighten your belts and get started with your work against Musa with determination. Whoever comes out victorious today will be the successful one."

قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَىٰ وَيْلَكُمْ لَا تَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا فَيُسْحِتَكُمْ بِعَذَابٍ
 وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ افْتَرَىٰ () فَتَنَّا زُجُورًا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ وَأَسْرَوْا السَّجْوَىٰ
 () قَالُوا إِن هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ
 بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَ بِطَرِيقَتِكُمُ الْمُثَلَىٰ () فَاجْمِعُوا كَيْدَكُمْ ثُمَّ اتُّو
 صَفَاءً وَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْيَوْمَ مَنْ اسْتَعْلَىٰ () (طه ع ٣)

"Musa said unto them: Woe unto you! Invent not a lie against Allah lest He extirpate you by some punishment. He who lieth faileth miserably!

Then they debated one with another what they must do, and they kept their counsel secret.

Lo! These are two wizards who would drive you out from your country by their magic and destroy your best traditions.

So arrange your plan and come in battle line. Who so is uppermost this day will be indeed successful:

(Ta'ha : 61-64)

The wizards turned to Musa and said:, "Lay aside such talk! Tell us whether you wish to begin or would like us to be the first?"

Musa seeing that his words had no effect, said, "You be the first to begin and do your best to your heart's desire."

The wizards then pulled their pieces of rope out of their bags and threw them and their staves on the ground, and they appeared as though they were gliding serpents and pythons.

Seeing this Musa feared lest the people be misled by the false show and think that; this wizardry is true and the awe stand as an obstacle in the way of their accepting the light of truth. But Allah assured him that he would triumph as He had already promised him, and commanded him to cast his staff down. Musa did so and his staff became a python and swallowed up the reptiles of the wizards. The field lay clear and the wizardry of the wizards proved a failure.

قَالُوا يُمُوسَىٰ إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَلْقَىٰ () قَالَ بَلْ
 الْقَوْمَاءُ فَإِذَا جَبَّ لَهُمْ وَعَصِيَّهُمْ يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهَا
 تَسْعَىٰ () فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً مُوسَىٰ () قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
 السَّاعِلِيُّ () وَأَلْقِ مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوا إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا
 كَيْدُ سِحْرٍ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَىٰ () (طه ع ٣)

They said: O Musa, either you throw first, or let us be the first to throw.

He said, Nay, do ye throw. Then lo! their cords and their staves, by their magic, appeared to him as though they ran.

And Musa conceived a fear in his mind.

We said, Fear not; lo! thou art the higher. Throw that which is in thy right hand. It will eat up that which have made. Lo! that which they have made is but a wizard's artifice, and a wizard shall not be successful to whatever point (of skill) he may attain. (Ta'ha: 65-69)

قَالُوا يُمُوسَىٰ إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِينَ () قَالَ
 الْقَوْمَاءُ فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَرْهَبُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا بِسِحْرٍ
 عَظِيمٍ () وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا
 يَأْفِكُونَ () فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ () فَغَلِبُوا هُنَا لَكَ
 وَأَنْقَلَبُوا صَغِيرِينَ () (اعراف ع ١٤)

They said, O Musa, Either throw (first) or let us be the first throwers.

He said, Throw, and when they threw they cast a spell upon the people's eyes and overawed them, and produced a mighty spell.

And we inspired Musa (saying) Throw thy staff, and lo! it swallowed up their lying show.

Thus was the truth vindicated and that which they were doing was made vain!

Thus were they defeated there and brought low.

(al A'raaf: 115-119)

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَى أَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلْقُونَ () فَلَمَّا
 أَلْقَوْا قَالَ مُوسَى مَا جِئْتُمْ بِهِ السَّحْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَيُبْطِلُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
 يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ () وَيُحِقُّ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
 الْمُجْرِمُونَ () (يونس ع ٨)

And when the wizards came, Musa said unto them, Cast your cast.

And when they had cast, Musa said, That which you have brought is magic. Lo! Allah will make it vain! Lo! Allah upholdeth not the work of mischief-makers.

And Allah will vindicate the Truth by His words, however much the guilty be averse work of mischief makers.

(Yunus: 80-82)

When the wizards, who were highly qualified in their skill, saw this miracle of Musa's staff, they understood the reality of the truth, and what Pharaoh and his courtiers were trying to hide, was exposed. They declared openly in the presence of that great gathering that this performance of Musa was a miracle of Allah Himself, not even remotely connected with any kind of magic, and they fell prostrate, announcing that they had brought faith in Allah of Musa and Haroon, for, He was, indeed, Rab ul Aalamin, Lord of all the Worlds.

فَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سُجَّدًا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَى ()

(طه ع ٣)

Then the wizards were (all) flung down prostrate, crying, We believe in the Lord of Haroon and Musa.

(Ta'ha: 70)

وَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سُجَّدَيْنِ () قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ () رَبِّ مُوسَى
 وَهَارُونَ () (اعراف ع ١٤)

And the wizards fell down prostrate, crying, We believe in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Musa and Haroon.

(al A'raaf: 120-122)

When Pharaoh realised that his stratagem had collapsed totally, and he had failed to humble Musa, he feared lest the masses might rebel against him, so

he declared to the wizards that it seemed that Musa was their teacher and they had conspired and although being his subjects, they had, without his permission, declared their faith in Allah of Musa and Haroon. The punishment they deserved was that their hands and feet should be cut on alternate sides and then they be crucified.

قَالَ امْتَنَّمْ لَهُ، قَبْلَ أَنْ اذْنَ لَكُمْ، إِنَّهُ، لَكَبِيرٌ كُمْ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ
السَّحْرَ، فَلَأَقْطَعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ وَنَأْ وَصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِي
جُدُوعِ النَّخْلِ، وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ أَيُّنَا أَشَدُّ عَذَابًا وَأَبْقَى (طه ع ٣)

Pharaoh said: Ye put faith in him before I give you leave. Lo! he is your chief who taught you magic. I shall cut off your hand your feet alternately, and I shall crucify you on the trunk of palm-trees, and ye shall know for certain which of us has sterner and more lasting punishment.

(Ta'ha: 71)

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ امْتَنَّمْ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ اذْنَ لَكُمْ، إِنَّ هَذَا الْمَكْرَ مَكْرَتُمُوهُ
فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لِيُخْرِجُوا مِنْهَا أَهْلَهَا، فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ (١٤)

(اعراف ع ١٤)

Pharaoh said: Ye believe in him before I give you leave. Lo! this is the plot you have plotted in the city that ye may drive its people hence. But ye shall come to know!

(al A'raaf: 123)

But true faith when it comes to one, even though it may be a moment's, creates such spiritual power that it cannot be over-awed by any earthly power, however great it may be.

The wizards who had just been soliciting rewards and positions now became so fearless, that the worst of threats proved vain. Nothing could make them waver, and they declared their Islam to Pharaoh's face. When they heard Pharaoh's words of tyranny, they replied:

قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْتِيَكَ عَلَى مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا فَاقْضِ مَا
أَنْتَ قَاضٍ، إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا (١) إِنَّا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِيَغْفِرَ لَنَا
خَطَايَانَا وَمَا أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السَّحْرِ، وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى (١)

(طه ع ٣)

They said: We choose thee not above the clear proofs that have come unto us, and above Him Who created us. So decree what thou wilt decree. Thou wilt end for us only the life of the world. Lo! We believe in our Lord that He may forgive us our sins and the magic to which thou didst force us. Allah is better and the more Lasting One.

(Ta'ha: 72-73)

قَالُوا لَاضْيِرَ إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ؕ إِنَّا نَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لَنَا رَبُّنَا
خَطَايَانَا أَنْ كُنَّا أَوَّلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ () (شعراء ع ٣)

They said: It is no hurt, for, lo! unto our Lord we are returning. We ardently hope that our Lord will forgive us our sins because we are the first of the believers.

(Shuara : 50-51)

Briefly, then, in this encounter Pharaoh with his henchmen and courtiers met with utter defeat and disgrace in full view of his subjects, and Allah's promise to Musa was fulfilled.

At this time, besides the wizards, some Israeli youth too converted to Islam, but because of Pharaoh's cruelty, did not make any announcement of their faith. His present humiliation had made him more irritable and more to be feared.

Musa advised them that now since they had come to believe, they should depend only on Allah for support. The believing group responded well and began praying for forgiveness and protection against sinning and the oppression of tyrants.

فَمَا آمَنَ لِمُوسَىٰ إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهِ عَلَىٰ خَوْفٍ مِّنْ فِرْعَوْنَ
وَمَلَائِهِمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَهُمْ ؕ وَإِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ ؕ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ
الْمُسْرِفِينَ () وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَقَوْمِ إِن كُنتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا
إِنْ كُنتُمْ مُسْلِمِينَ () فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً
لِّلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ () وَنَجِّنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ()

(يونس ع ٩)

And none trusted Musa save some scions of his people, (and they were) in fear of Pharaoh and their chiefs that they

would persecute them. Lo! Pharaoh was verily a tyrant in the land, and lo! he verily was of the wanton.

And Musa said: O my people, if you have believed in Allah then put your trust in Him, if you have, indeed, surrendered. (unto Him).

They said, In Allah we put our trust. Our Lord!, Oh, make us not a lure for the wrong-doing folk!

And, of Thy mercy save us from the folk that disbelieve.

(Yunus: 83-86)

Although Pharaoh made a great show of his temper, he was so completely overawed by Musa's spiritual dominance that he could not dare say anything to him. The courtiers protested and asked why Musa was not being ordered to be executed, and why was he and his people being given the opportunity to create mischief in the country and keep disgracing their king and their gods.

Pharaoh told them to rest and assured them that he would not let the power of the Israelis increase; and he ordered there and then that Israeli male babies must be killed as soon as they are born, but the female should be spared to live for service.

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَتَنْذَرُ مُوسَى وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَيَذَرُكَ وَالْهَيْكَلُ قَالَ سَنَقْتُلُ أَبْنَاءَ هُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا
فَوْقَهُمْ قَاهِرُونَ () (اعراف ع ١٥)

The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said (O king) Wilt thou suffer Musa and his people to make mischief in the land and flout thee and thy gods? He said: We shall slay their sons and spare their women, for lo! we are in power over them.

(al A'raaf: 127)

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَنٍ مُبِينٍ () إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ
وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ () فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِ
نَاقَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاءَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءَهُمْ وَمَا كَيْدُ
الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ () (غافر ع ٣)

And verily We sent Musa with our revelations and a clear warrant unto Pharaoh and Haman and Korah, but they said, A lying sorcerer.

And when he brought them the Truth from Our presence, they said, Slay the sons of those who believe with him, but spare their women. But the plot of disbelievers ends in nothing but ruin. (al Momin : 23-25)

This was the second declaration of Pharaoh for the killing of Israeli male babies.

History shows that whenever a nation continues for long in slavery, its deplorable condition does not end with poverty, indolence and sufferings, but more than the rusting of their physical capability, their mental talents become weak and useless; they lose courage and they get contented with their degraded state, they lose hope and begin to look upon their disgrace as patience.

That is why when some prophet or reformer tries to pull them out of their morass, his message appears to them as the most difficult and impractical prescription. Sometimes the hardships of the way to freedom make them fight amongst themselves, and sometimes they look upon their emancipator with suspicion. If they see some benefit come to them, they rejoice in undignified and non serious ways, and if they come by some pain or loss, they blame their benefactor for it; that they have been put to this trouble for nothing and they were quite content with their lot before.

This is what happened with the Israelis under Musa. When he was informed of Pharaoh's talk with his courtiers, he gathered the Israelis and advised them to have faith in Allah and be patient; but they answered, : "Musa, we were already suffering badly and on thy coming we regained some hope , but now we find that our sufferings are the same. We may face greater trouble now."

Musa told them that Allah's promise was true and they must not be anxious because it is they who will succeed; and their enemy will be destroyed. The owner of the land of Egypt is not Pharaoh but the Lord of all the Worlds, the Absolute Allah. He makes owners whom He wills, the reward is for those who fear Him.

قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا
مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ () قَالُوا أُوذِينَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ
تَأْتِنَا وَمِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا قَالَ عَسَى رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَدُوَّكُمْ
وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ () (اعراف ع ١٥)

And Musa said to his people: Seek help in Allah and endure. Lo! The earth is Allah's. He giveth it for an inheritance to whom He will. And lo! the reward is for those who keep their duty (unto Him).

They said: We suffered hurt before thou camest unto us, and since thou hast come unto us. He said: It may be that your Lord is going to destroy your adversary and make you viceroys in the earth, that he may see how you behave.

(al A'raaf--129)

Musa told them further that Pharaoh's tyranny would continue. He was not prepared to let the Israelis and Egyptian believers go from Egypt, and therefore, until the time that Allah's help comes, they should make their houses places of worship, facing a common direction (qibla), to worship Allah the One and only. This was what he had been directed by inspiration.

Musa, then prayed in these words:

"O Allah! the wealth and glory, Thou hast given Pharaoh has not made him grateful to Thee, but more tyrannical and proud; and they neither submit to Thy way nor let others submit to it. So let them suffer on account of their tyranny and destroy their wealth and glory of which they are so proud; and just as they are rejecting the truth of Thy faith, so may Thou punish them so terribly that their legend may become a lesson for others!"

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَنْ تَبَوَّأَ لِقَوْمِكَ بِمِصْرَ بُيُوتًا وَاجْعَلُوا
بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ () وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ رَبَّنَا
إِنَّكَ آتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَأَهُ زِينَةً وَأَمْوَالًا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا رَبَّنَا
لِيُضِلُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِكَ رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلَىٰ أَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاشْدُدْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ
فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّىٰ يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ () قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَتْ دَعْوَتُكُمْ
فَاسْتَقِيمُوا وَلَا تَتَّبِعَانَّ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ () (يونس ع ٩)

And We inspired Musa and his brother (saying) Appoint houses for your people in Egypt and make your houses oratories and establish worship. And give good news to the believers.

And Musa said: Our Lord! Lo! Thou has given Pharaoh and his chiefs splendour and riches in the life of the world. Our Lord! That they may lead men away from Thy way. Our Lord! Destroy their riches and harden their hearts so that they believe not till they see the painful doom!

He said your prayer is heard. Do ye twain keep to the straight path, and follow not the road of those who have no knowledge.

(Yunus:87-89)

Although Pharaoh had expressed his sanguinity before his courtiers, inwardly he was disturbed by the spiritual dominance of Musa. Even the orders he had given for the slaughter of Israeli newborns gave him no peace of mind. He began to think that as long as Musa lived things would not improve for him. He told his advisers that if Musa were allowed to continue free, he would gradually change their religion and create disturbances throughout the realm. It seems proper, therefore, that he should be executed.

When Musa heard of this decision, he said that he was not afraid of such a vainglorious man, who did not fear the Last Day of Reckoning. "My Patron," said Musa, "is Allah Who is my Lord and your Lord, and I seek refuge in Him alone!

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ مُوسَى وَلْيَدْعُ رَبَّهُ ۗ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ
دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ () وَقَالَ مُوسَى إِنِّي عُذْتُ
بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ()

(مومن ع ٣)

And Pharaoh said suffer me to kill Musa and let him cry unto his Lord. Lo! I fear that he will alter your religion or that he will cause confusion in the land.

Musa said, I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every scorner who believeth not in a Day of Reckoning.

(Momin:26-27)

When Pharaoh and his chiefs were busy in this discussion, there was present among them a true believer who had so far kept his Islam secret. When he heard these last words, he spoke up in defence of Musa. He said, "Do you want to kill a man who speaks the truth that his Lord is Allah; and in support of his word possesses certain arguments and tokens. And if he is a liar, his lies can do you no harm; but if he speaks the truth, it is best to fear the threats that he says are from Allah."

Pharaoh cut the man's speech short and told him: "What I am advising you is only for your own good."

The pious man said: "Still, I am afraid lest our condition become like that of the people of Noah, or A'd and Thamud, and others like them who came after. Allah is never cruel to his devotees; their destruction is always their own handiwork. What you are thinking is of today's pomp and power, but I am afraid for you of the day when people will cry out to one another and there will be none to save you from Allah's punishment! So, O chiefs of the people

reflect when Joseph came here and announced his message, your forefathers wavered and did not believe in him, and when he passed away they said, 'now Allah will not send another prophet'. And now you are doing the same with Musa:

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ يَكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ ۗ وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِيبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَابٌ () يَقَوْمِ لَكُمْ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظَهْرَيْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنَا مِنَ بَنِي اللَّهِ أَنْ جَاءَنَا ۗ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَرَىٰ وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ () وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَقَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ () مِثْلَ ذَابِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعِبَادِ () وَيَقَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ () يَوْمَ تُولُونَ مُدْبِرِينَ ۗ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَصِيمٍ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ () وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ نَبْعَثَ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا ۗ كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُّرْتَابٌ () وَالَّذِينَ يُحَادِلُونَ فِي آيَةِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَهُمُ كَبْرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۗ كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ قَلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ () (مومن ع ٤)

And a believing man of Pharaoh's family, who hid his faith, said: Would you kill a man because he sayeth, My Lord is Allah and hath brought you clear proofs from his Lord? If he is lying, then his lie is upon him, and if he is truthful, then some of that with which he threateneth you will strike you. Lo! Allah guideth not one who is a prodigal, a liar.

O my people! Yours is the kingdom today, ye being supermost in the land, but who would save us from the wrath of Allah should it reach us? Pharaoh said, I do but show you what I think, and I do guide you to wise policy.

And he who believed, said,

O my people! Lo! I fear for you a fate like that of the factions (of old), a plight like that of Noah's folk, and A'd and Thamud and those after them; And Allah willeth no injustice for his slaves. And O my people lo! I fear for a day of summoning. A day when ye will turn to flee having no preserver from Allah; and he whom Allah sendeth astray, for him there is no guide.

And verily Joseph brought you of old clear proofs, yet you ceased not to be in doubt concerning what he brought till when he died ye said, Allah will not send any messenger after him. Thus Allah deceiveth him who is a prodigal, a doubter.

Those who wrangle concerning the revelations of Allah without any warrant having come to them. It is greatly hateful in the sight of Allah and in the sight of those who believe. Thus doth Allah print on every arrogant, disdainful heart.

(al Momin: 28-33)

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَوْمَ اتَّبَعُونَ أَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ () يَوْمَ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ () مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُحْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا، وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَتَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ () وَيَوْمَ مَالِي أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجْوَةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ () تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَأُشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ، وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْخَفَّارِ () لَأَجْرَمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنْ مَّرَدَّنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ () فَسْتَذَكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأَفْوَضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ (مومن ع ٥)

"And he who believed said, O my people, follow me, I will show you the way of right conduct.

O my people, lo! the life of the world is but a passing comfort, and lo! the Hereafter, that is the enduring home.

Who so doeth an ill deed, he will be repaid the like thereof, while who so doeth right, male or female and is a believer, (all) such will enter the Garden, where they will be nourished without stint.

And, O my people! What aileth me that I call you unto deliverance when ye call me unto the Fire!

Ye call me to disbelieve in Allah and ascribe unto him partners that whereof I have no knowledge, while I call you unto the mighty, the Forgiver!

Assuredly whereunto you call me hath no claim in the world or in the Hereafter, and our return will be unto Allah and the prodigals will be owners of the Fire.

And ye will remember what I say unto you. I confide my case unto Allah. Lo! Allah is seer over His slaves."

(al Momin: 38-44)

When Pharaoh and his chiefs heard these words of this bold believer, their attention was turned from Musa to him, and they thought of disposing of him first and slaying him. But Allah did not permit them to succeed in their intention.

فَوَقَاهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَمَكُرُوا وَحَاقَ بِالْفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ () النَّارُ
يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ
فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ () (مومن ع ٥)

"So Allah warded off from him the evil which they plotted, while a dreadful doom accompanied Pharaoh's folk.

The fire they are exposed to morning and evening; and on the day when the hour upriseth (it is said): Cause Pharaoh's folk to enter the most awful doom. (al Momin: 45-46)

The Old Testament mentions most of all this but leaves out two points: one that of Pharaoh's command to slaughter Israeli male infants; and the other of this believer from amongst Pharaoh's own people who tried to make them desist from killing Musa and called on them to believe the message of truth.

The reason for the latter omission was probably that Pharaoh's tyranny had raised the temper of the victims to such a pitch that out of their malice they did not want it to go on record that even one individual among Pharaoh's people possessed the spirit of goodness and supporting the truth.

Pharaoh's claim to divinity —

When threats and anger of Pharaoh and his chiefs proved ineffective for defeating Musa and they could not muster enough courage to kill Musa, they took to insulting him in different ways, while Pharaoh announced that there was no god besides him. Musa's Allah was not seen by him or anybody else, while he was there before all eyes to see in all his pomp and glory and power. The result was that the change that had taken place after Musa's display of his portents and miracle, gradually faded away before the lust for worldly riches and advancement, and all joined up again with Pharaoh and his peers.

وَنَادَى فِرْعَوْنُ فِي قَوْمِهِ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَلَيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ مِصْرَ وَهَذِهِ
النَّهْرُ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِي أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ () أَمْ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي
هُوَ مَهِينٌ () وَلَا يَكَادُبِينُ () فَلَوْلَا أُلْقِيَ عَلَيْهِ أَسْوِرَةٌ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ
أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مُقْتَرِنِينَ () فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ، فَاطَّاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ () (زخرف ع ٥)

“And Pharaoh caused a proclamation to be made among his people, saying O my people! Is not mine the sovereignty of Egypt and these rivers flowing under me? Can ye not then discern?”

I am surely better than this fellow who is despicable and can hardly make (his meaning) plain.

Why then have armlets of gold not be set upon him, or angels sent along with him?

Thus he persuaded his people to make light (of Musa). And they obeyed him. Lo! They were a wanton folk!

(al Zukhryf: 51-540)

Pharaoh looked upon wealth and worldly glory as the criterion of greatness. This is, of course, the usual criterion of those whose life-objective is this world. Musa possessed neither wealth nor worldly glitter.

Shah Abdul Qadir tells us that “Pharaoh used to wear gold armlets, and award gold armlets to nobles with whom he was particularly pleased, and soldiers stood in array before him. That is why he presented the same argument before the people and it appealed to them. With one voice they declared obedience to him. They did not understand that with Allah the criterion is faith in Him and sincerity to Him, not wealth and pomp and status; though He bestows these

things also on the truly faithful and pure of heart, while those who have no more than worldly wealth to be vain about, end up with nothing but everlasting disgrace. This is what happened to Musa also and the Israelis on the one hand and Pharaoh and his people on the other.

فَلَمَّا اسْفُوتْنَا انْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ () فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفًا
وَمَثَلًا لِّلْآخِرِينَ ()
(زخرف ع ٥)

So when he angered us, We punished them and drowned them, everyone.

And we made them a thing past, and an example for those after (them). (Zukhruf: 55-56)

ثُمَّ ادْبَرِيسَعَى () فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَى () فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى () فَأَخَذَهُ
اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى () إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّمَن يَّخْشَى ۚ ()
(النازعات ع ١)

Then turned he away in haste; then gathered he and summoned; and proclaimed, I am your lord the highest. So Allah seized him (and made him) an example for the after (life) and for the former. Lo! Herein is indeed a lesson for him who feareth. (al-Naaziaat: 22-26)

Wrath of Allah on Egyptians —

The counsels and good words of Musa had no effect on Pharaoh and his chiefs or the common people, and, at the same time, the slaughter of male Israeli infants continued. Musa was insulted and Pharaoh's claim to divinity was aired with great noise. At last Musa was inspired to warn Pharaoh that if he did not recant his ways, the punishment of Allah would come down on them. But none gave any heed and so Divine curses followed one after another.

Now, when one punishment came, Pharaoh and his subjects would request Musa that he pray to his Allah to relieve them of the suffering and they would believe in him. But as soon as they were relieved, they resumed their old ways. Divine punishment would now descend in a different form, and again Pharaoh would plead Musa for relief and he would promise to free the Israelis and let them go, but as soon as the curse was lifted, Pharaoh and his subjects would again go back on their word. Other curses and similar insincere promises of repentance and relief continued until there came the final punishment, and Pharaoh and his chiefs were drowned in full view of their erstwhile victims.

THE SIGNS OF ALLAH -

Allah bestowed on Musa a number of signs or miracles. These are mentioned in Surah Baqar, A'raaf, Namal, Qasas, Asra, Ta'ha, Zukhruf, Momin, Qamar, and al-Naziaat.

In Asra we have:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ فَمَثَلًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ فَقَالَ لَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ يُمُوسَى مَسْحُورًا () قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا أَنْزَلَ هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ بِصَآئِرٍ وَأَنَا لَأَظُنُّكَ يَفِرْعَوْنُ مُثَبَّرًا ()

(بنی اسرائیل ع ۱۲)

And verily we gave unto Musa nine tokens, clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty). Do but ask the Children of Israel how he came unto them, then Pharaoh said unto him, Lo! I deem thee one bewitched, O Musa.

He said: In truth thou knowest that none sent down these (portents) save the Lord of the heavens and the earth as proofs, and lo! (for my part), I deem thee lost, O Pharaoh.

(Bani Israil:101-102)

In Namal, Zukhruf, and al Naaziaat, they are mentioned, without their number, only as *aayaat* or portents, sometimes as *aayaat bayyanaat*, *aayaat mufsilat*, *aayaat ul kubra*, and sometimes simply as *aayaat-i-na*. In these Surahs, besides detailed or brief descriptions, the portents or miracles are also mentioned separately. If they are collected together, a list, as following, may be prepared.

The staff, the white shining hand, famine, damaged harvest of fruit, storms and tempests, locusts, lice, frogs, blood, splitting of the sea, manna and salva, shady clouds, water from rocks, hill moving to come above the heads and revelation of the holy book Tora.

Considering the details and different interpretations, commentators are confused about finding a way to determine the "nine" tokens²⁸ as well as retain the detail of the rest of Allah's portents in their proper order. Qazi Baydavi and some commentators believe that the nine portents referred to in Asra do

²⁸ Commentators say that the punishment with lice and frogs was that they infested every clothing, and utensil of food and water, and that of blood that the Red Sea and water-wells became bloodish rendering the water undrinkable.

not include those that were shown for the mission to Pharaoh and his people for their admonition, but those that were granted to Musa after they had crossed the sea. In support of this contention, a tradition from Safwan b. Assaal is quoted to the effect that once two Jews came to the Prophet ﷺ and putting him to the test, asked for an expatiation of the nine portents of Musa.

The Prophet answered: "The commands were: Do not associate partners with Allah; do not commit adultery; do not commit murder; do not steal; do not indulge in magic; do not take the life of an innocent man through orders; do not practise usury; do not slander; do not flee from battle (the two Jews doubted whether this last was correct). And one more, he said, particular for Israelis, namely, do not break the Sabbath."²⁹

But this interpretation of the commentators is wrong because in Surah e Asra together with the nine portents the dialogue between Musa and Pharaoh is also mentioned. Seeing the portents Pharaoh exclaims: that all this is magic; and Musa replies that that these were portents of Allah and Pharaoh was dooming himself to dire punishment by rejecting them.

How can it be right in this place to take commands for portents? These portents showed up after Pharaoh was drowned. The same holds good for Tirmizi's Tradition. Besides, the Qur'anic Verse under consideration mentions nine portents and Safwan's Tradition gives ten commands³⁰. Besides, in Namal the "white shining hand" is included among the nine, and it is also detailed that these portents were intended for Pharaoh and his people to help them believe and take a lesson from.

وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجَ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ
إِنِّي فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ () (نمل ع)

*"And put thy hand into the bosom of thy robe, It will come forth white but unhurt (This will be one) among nine tokens unto Pharaoh and his people. Lo! They were evil living folk!
(Namal: 12)*

After this clarification of the Qur'an, neither the Tradition remains beyond suspicion, nor can the commentators be right, Ibn Kathir commenting on this Tradition writes:

²⁹ Tirmizi, Kitab ul Tafsir vol 2 p 159

³⁰ These are stated also in the Old Testament. Exodus: 24 / 28

Abdullah ibn Abbas's commentary implies that of all the portents granted to Musa, one part is of those before the crossing over & the other of those after same view.

frogs, locusts, and blood. Mujahid, Akrama, Sha'abi and Qatada are of the the staff, the white shining hand, famine, bad fruit harvests, tempests, lice, nine portents were:

been confused. To be preferred is Abdullah ibn Abbas's opinion that the because the portents before the crossing over and after the cross over have to Pharaoh. But their details too are diverse and at variance with one another equated the nine portents with those granted to Musa to confirm his mission The commentary, thus, is unreliable. As against it, some commentators have

Tirmizi, Ibn e Maja and Nisai have recorded this Tradition from Sha'ba b. al-Hajaj in different forms and Tirmizi says that this is hasan sahi. But there is ambiguity in the Tradition and something wrong with Abdullah b. Salma's memory. (Other Traditionists have criticised him. He has confused the ten commands stated by the Prophet with the portents. The ten commands are to be found in the Old Testament. They have nothing to do with Pharaoh and the admonition given him. (Allah knows best) while the objective of the nine portents is support for the admonition. That is why Musa told Pharaoh that Pharaoh knew very well that these portents were sent down by God only to provide vision and lessons. That is, to confirm the message brought for him." And I, O Pharaoh, look upon you as fated for destruction." (Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol. 6 p. 112)

(تفسیر ابن کثیر جلد ۶ ص ۱۱۲) (تفسیر ابن کثیر جلد ۶ ص ۱۱۲)
 بهذا الحديث رواه هكذا الترمذى والنسائى واجله حجة وابن جرير فى
 تفسيره من طرق عن شعبة بن الصخري قال الترمذى حسن
 صحيح ومحدث مشكل وعبدالله بن سلمة فى حقه فى
 كالمواثيق وعله اشبهه عليه السلام بالعبث بالعبث
 فى التوراة لا تعلق لها لقيام الحج على فرعون والله اعلم
 وهذا فى موسى لفرعون لقد علمت ما ترى هؤلاء النبوت والارض
 بضائر اى حجة وادلة على صدق ما جئت به واني لاطلاق

the crossing over the sea. The former concern Musa's confrontation with Pharaoh. They are nine of which the staff and the white shining hand are the "greater portents".

فَارِسُ الْآيَةِ الْكُبْرَى (النازعات)

"Showed him (Pharaoh) a great portent (al Naziaat)

وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجُ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ

(نمل ع ١)

Put thy hand into the bosom of thy robe. It will come forth white but unhurt (This will be among nine token unto Pharaoh and his people. (Namal: 12)

The other seven are portents of punishment which made life uneasy for the Egyptians

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصِ مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذْكُرُونَ () فَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا هَذِهِ وَإِنْ تُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَى وَمَنْ مَعَهُ ۗ أَلَّا إِنَّمَا طَائِرُهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَآيِعْلَمُونَ () وَقَالُوا مَهْمَا تَأْتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ آيَةٍ لِّتَسْحَرَنَا بِهَا ۗ فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ () فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالدَّمَ آيَاتٍ مُّفَصَّلَاتٍ ۗ

(الاعراف ع ١٦)

And we straitened Pharaoh's folk with famine and the dearth of fruits, that peradventure they might heed. But whenever good befell them they said, this is ours. And whenever evil smote them they ascribed it to the evil auspices of Musa and those with him. Surely their evil auspice was only with Allah; but most of them know not.

And they said: Whatever portent thou bringest wherewith to bewitch us, we shall not put faith in thee.

So we sent unto them the flood and the locusts and the vermine, and the frogs and the blood, a succession of clear signs. (al A'raaf: 132-133)

The other part of the "clear signs" concern Musa and the Israelis , of which some are miracles to preserve them and reinforce the words of Musa; for instance, manna and salva, the shadow of clouds, and the springs of water from twelve rocks; and some are to keep the Israelis from being rebellion, for instance, the splitting of a part of Mt. Sinai and coming to hover above their heads.

وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُّوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ

(بقره ع ٦)

And We sent down on you the manna and the quails (saying) Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنَّا الظُّلُمَاتِ الْغَمَامَ (بقره ع ٦)

And We caused the white cloud to overshadow you.

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ
فَانفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَا عَشَرَ عَيْنًا

(بقره ع ٧)

And when Musa asked for water for his people. We said strike with thy staff the rock and there gushed out therefrom twelve springs.
(Baqar: 57 and 60)

The frontier between the two categories of the portents is that great miracle which divided the sea in two parts, making the road clear for the people to pass. This was in reality a clear sign of victory for a life of suffering; the end of one and the bright beginning of another. The details are stated in Surah A'raaf, Asra, Ta'ha, Shu-ara, Qasas, Zukhruf, Dukhkan, and Zarriyat.

And all these portents were but the preface to the yet greater miracle, the revelation of the Tora!

وَأَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ

And We revealed the Tora which containing a treasury of light and guidance.

This comment of Abdullah. b Abbas is decisive for our subject. As Ibn Kathir says.

وَهَذَا الْقَوْلُ ظَاهِرٌ حَلِيٌّ قَوِيٌّ

"This comment is clear, appealing and forceful."³¹

(Ibn Kathir vol. 6 p. 111)

We note, then, that the Egyptians were visited with different forms of dire punishment and each time a punishment came they flocked to Mūsa to get them relieved of it, and after the relief they resumed their old ways of disobedience and rebellion and ridicule. The details a given in A'raaf have already been stated. Among the portents of punishment frogs and *qumul*³² are mentioned which infested everything of ordinary everyday use to the point of making them tired of life. About blood, it is written that the waters of the Nile looked like blood and its taste made drinking of it difficult. Even the fish died in the water. This is also mentioned in the Exodus.

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ فَسَأَلَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ
فَقَالَ لَهُ، فِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ يُمُوسَى مَسْحُورًا () قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتِ
مَا أَنْزَلَ هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ بِصَايِرَةٍ وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ
يَفِرْعَوْنُ مَثْبُورًا
(اسراء ع ١٢)

And verily We gave unto Musa nine tokens, clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty) . Do but ask the Children of Israel how he came unto them, then Pharaoh said unto him, Lo! I deem thee one bewitched, O Musa!"

He said, In truth thou knowest that none sent these (portents) save the Lord of the heavens and the earth as proofs, and lo! for my part I deem thee lost, O Pharaoh.

(Asra: 101-102)

وَلَقَدْ آرَيْنَهُ آيَاتِنَا كُلَّهَا فَكَذَّبَ وَأَبَى () (طه ع ٣)

³¹ Worth reading in this connection are: Rooh ul Ma'ani, Ibn Kathir Tafsir e Kabir and al Bahr ul Muheet. *وَذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ*

³² According to Ibn Abbas *qumul* is that parasite which destroys foodgrains. He also holds that it is that small locust which has no wings and destroys foodgrains. Mujahid, Akrama and Qatada also think so. Ibn Jarir says that it an insect like lice which attacks camels. Aghab Isphahani thinks that it is a small fly that is extremely injurious. In ordinary usage *qumul* is lice. The Old Testament mentions both lice and flies. Read together, why may it no be concluded that Allah punished the Egyptian peoples with lice, their animals with epidemic germs, and their foodgrain with destructive insects: all included in the word *qumul*.

And We verily did show him all Our tokens but he denied them and refused. (Ta'ha: 56)

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ () وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا
وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُفْسِدِينَ () (غل ع ١)

But when Our tokens came unto them, plain to see, they said, This is mere magic. And they denied them, though their souls acknowledged them, for spite, and arrogance. Then see the nature of the consequence for the wrong-doers.

(Namal: 13-14)

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّفْتَرَى وَمَا
سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي آبَائِنَا الْأَوَّلِينَ () وَقَالَ مُوسَى رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ جَاءَ
بِالْهُدَى مِنْ عِنْدِهِ وَمَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ
الظَّالِمُونَ () (قصص ع ٤)

But when Musa came unto them with our clear tokens, they said, This is nothing but invented magic. We never heard of this among our fathers of old.

And Musa said, My Lord is best aware of him who bringeth guidance from His presence, and whose will be the sequel of the Home (of bliss). Lo! wrongdoers will not be successful.

(al-Qasas: 36-37)

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَقَالَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ رَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ () فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَضْحَكُونَ () وَمَا نُرِيهِمْ
مِّنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أُخْتِهَا وَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ()
وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا السَّحِرُ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ ۗ إِنَّا لَمُهْتَدُونَ ()
فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابَ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُتُونَ () (زخرف ع ٥)

And verily We sent Musa with Our revelations unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, and he said, I am a messenger of the Lord of the Worlds. But when he brought them Our tokens, behold!

they laughed at them. And every token that We showed them was greater than sister (token), and We grasped them with the torment, that haply they might turn again. And they said: O wizard! entreat thy Lord for us by the pact that He hath made with thee. Lo! we verily will walk aright. But when We relieved them of their torment, behold! they broke their word. (Al Zukhruf: 46-50)

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرُ (١) كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَخْذَ عَزِيزٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ (٢)

(قمر ع ٣)

And warnings came in truth to the house of Pharaoh Who denied Our revelations, every one. Therefore We grasped them with the grasp of the Mighty, the Powerful.

(Qamar: 41-42)

فَارَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَى (١) فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَى (٢) (والنازعات ع ١)

And he showed them the tremendous token, but he denied and disobeyed. (Al Naziaat: 20-21)

When matters came to such a pitch, Allah commanded Musa that the time had come for him to take the Israelis out of Egypt and lead them into the land of their forefathers.

There are two roads that go from Egypt to Palestine or the region of Canaan: one across dry land, the shorter route, and the other by crossing the Red Sea into the wilderness of Shur and the Sinai. Allah directed that the latter, the longer, route should be taken. Had the dry route been taken Pharaoh would have overtaken the Israelis quite soon, a battle, perhaps would follow, and the Israelis who were used to centuries long slavery, and who had become cowardly and docile, would have given in and forced to return to Egypt. The Exodus says:

"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea and the Children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt."

(Ch. 13 / 17-18)

Besides, it was God's intention to demonstrate that the tyranny of tyrants like Pharaoh and his people deserved to be punished by a proportionate punishment.

Musa and Haroon fled by night and they were unable even to return the ornaments they had borrowed from Egyptian women on a festival lest the Egyptians should come to know what the Israelis were up to.

Pharaoh's intelligence officers informed him that the Isrealis had fled from the towns. Pharaoh collected a big army and went in pursuit and came in sight of them before the dawn of day. According to the Exodus the Isrealis numbered about six-hundred thousand, besides children and animals but when they saw Pharaoh's hosts, they exclaimed:

"Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness: Wherefor hast thou dealt with us to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For, it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." (Exodus: 14/ 11-12)

The drowning of Pharaoh:

Musa consoled them, telling that God's promise was bound to prove true, He would deliver them and it is they who would be victorious. Then he turned to pray God, and God inspired him to strike the waters with his staff so that they would divide leaving a dry path between them. Musa then told them to pass through by this dry path which they did. By now Pharaoh had also arrived with his hosts and boasted to them that it was his miracle that they had caught up to them and he ordered that they should now follow them through the way they saw them pass. They went down the same way, but just as the last Israeli stepped on the farther shore, the waters closed in on Pharaoh and his hosts and they were all drowned.

As Pharaoh was drowning and angels of punishment appeared before him, he began exclaiming: " I believe in the One True God in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of the believers." But because this belief was not sincere, like his former profession of fraud, momentary words in a crucial situation, the Divine answer was:

أَلَا نَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ () (يونس ع ٩)

What now! when hitherto thou hast rebelled and been of the wrongdoers. (Yunus: 91)

That is, God knows very well that you, Pharaoh, are not of those who genuinely surrender but, at heart, still a man of mischief. His exclamation was not of faith but that of getting relief from the doom of God's punishment after it was seen as certain. Musa, it will be recalled, had prayed for such an end for Pharaoh.

فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ () قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبْتُ دَعْوَتَكُمْ

(يونس ع ٩)

Our Lord! So that they believe not till they see the painful doom. He said, Your prayer is heard..... " (Yunus: 88-89)

God added in answer to Pharaoh's exclamation:

الْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلَقَكَ آيَةً (الآية)

But this day We save thee in thy body that thou mayest be a portent for those after thee. (Yunus: 92)

If, as an Egyptian journal says; Munfatch or Ramesses II was the Pharaoh of Musa, his body is preserved to this day and can be seen in the museum of the Department of Egyptology. A part of the nose is missing because of having been in water for some hours, it was, probably, bitten off by fish.

Even if the Pharaoh of Musa was some other, the Qur'anic Verse is not affected. The Exodus tells us that the Israelis saw with their own eyes the bodies of Egyptians that were washed ashore. (Ch.14.31)

The Qur'an has not dealt at length with the departure of the Israelis from Egypt, the drowning of Pharaoh and deliverance of the Israelis, mentioning only the necessary parts of the narrative, but the admonition, the counsels and lessons to be learnt are given at length.

وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى أَنْ أَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي فَاصْرِبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيقًا فِي
الْبَحْرِ يَبَسًا لَّا تَخَفُ دَرَكًا وَلَا تَخْشَى () فَاتَّبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ بِجُنُودِهِ
فَغَشَّيَهُمْ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا غَشَّيَهُمْ () وَأَضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهُ وَمَا هَدَى ()

(طه ع ٤)

And verily We inspired Musa, saying, take away My slaves by night and strike for them a dry path in the sea, fearing not to be overtaken, neither being afraid of the sea. Then Pharaoh followed with his hosts and there covered them which did cover them of the sea. And Pharaoh led his folk astray, he did not guide them. (Ta'ha:77-79)

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَسْرِ بِعِبَادِيٰ إِنَّكَ مُتَّبَعُونَ () فَأَرْسَلْنَا فِرْعَوْنَ
 فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ () إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَشِرْذِمَةٌ قَلِيلُونَ () وَإِنَّهُمْ لَنَا
 لَغَائِظُونَ () وَأَنَا لَجَمِيعٌ حَذِرُونَ () فَأَخْرَجْنَاهُمْ مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ()
 وَكُنُوزٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ () كَذَلِكَ ۗ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ () فَاتَّبَعُوهُمْ
 مُشْرِقِينَ () فَلَمَّا تَرَاءَ الْجَمْعَيْنِ قَالَ اصْحَبْ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّا لَمُدْرِكُوكَ ()
 قَالَ كَلَّاءَ إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ () فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ اضْرِبْ
 بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ ۗ فَانفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطُّورِ الْعَظِيمِ () وَأَزَلَفْنَا
 ثَمَّ الْآخِرِينَ () وَأَنْجَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ ۗ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ ۗ أَجْمَعِينَ () ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا
 الْآخِرِينَ () إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً ۗ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ () وَإِنَّ
 رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ () (الشعراء ع ٤)

And We inspired Musa saying, take away My slaves by night, for you will be pursued. Then Pharaoh sent into cities summoners (who said) these, indeed, are but a little troop, and they are offenders against us And lo! we are a ready host. Thus did we take them away from gardens and watersprings and treasures and a fait estate. Thus (were these things taken away from them), and We caused the Children of Israel to inherit them. And they overtook them at sunrise. And when the two hosts saw one other, those with Musa said, lo! we are, indeed, caught. He said, nay, verily! for lo! my Lord is with us. He will guide me. Then We inspired Musa, saying, strike the sea with thy staff. And it parted, and each part was as a mountain vast. Then We brought near the others to that place. And We saved Musa and those with him, every one. We drowned the others. Lo! herein indeed is a portent, yet most of them are not believers. And lo! thy Lord ! He is indeed the Mighty, the Wise! (Shu-ara: 52-68)

فَاتَّقَمْنَا مِنْهُمُ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا
 غَافِلِينَ () وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ

وَمَغَارِبَهَا الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ۚ بِمَا صَبَرُوا ۖ وَدَمَّرْنَا مَا كَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ ()
(الاعراف ع ١٦)

Therefore, We took retribution from them; therefore, We drowned them in the sea because they denied Our revelations and were heedless of them. And We caused the folk who were despised to inherit the eastern parts of the land and the western parts thereof which We had blessed. And the fair word of the Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of their endurance and We annihilated all that Pharaoh and his folk had done and that they had contrived.
(al A'araaf: 136-137)

وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَاتَّبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ، بَغْيًا وَعَدُوًّا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ قَالَ آمَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي آمَنْتُ بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ () أَلْتَنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ () فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلَقَ آيَةً ۚ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنَّا لَعَافُونَ ()
(يونس ع ٩)

And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea, and Pharaoh with his hosts pursued them in rebellion and transgression till the fate (of drowning) overtook him, he exclaimed, I believe that there is no God save Him in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those who surrender (unto Him). What! now! when hitherto thou hast rebelled and been of the wrong-doers! But this day We save thee in thy body that thou mayest be a portent for those after thee. Lo! most of mankind are heedless of Our portents.

(Yunus: 90-92)

وَأَسْتَكْبِرَهُوْ وَجُنُودُهُ، فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَظَنُّوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَأُيْرَجَعُونَ () فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ، فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ ۖ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ ()
(قصص ع ٤)

And he and his hosts were haughty in the land and deemed that they would never be brought back to us. Therefore, We seized him and his hosts and abandoned them unto the sea. Behold the nature of the consequence for evil-doers.

(Qasas: 39-40)

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَجَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ كَرِيمٌ () أَنْ أَدُّوا إِلَيَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ () وَأَنْ لَا تَعْلُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي آتِيكُمْ بِسُلْطَنِ مُبِينٍ () وَإِنِّي عَذْتُ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ أَنْ تُرْجَمُونَ () وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا لِي فَاعْتَرِلُون () فَدَعَارَبَهُ أَنْ هُوَ لَأَقَوْمٌ مُجْرِمُونَ () فَاسْرِبْ بِعِبَادِي لَيْلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُتَّبَعُونَ () وَاتْرِكِ الْبَحْرَ رَهْوًا إِنَّهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُغْرَقُونَ () كَمْ تَرَكَوْا مِنْ جَنَّتٍ وَعَيْوُنٍ () وَزُرُوعٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ () وَنَعْمَةً كَانُوا فِيهَا فَكِهِينَ () كَذَلِكَ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ () فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنظَرِينَ () وَلَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ () مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيًّا مِّنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ()

(الدخان ع ١ ، ٢)

And verily we tried before them Pharaoh's folk, then there came unto them a noble messenger, saying, give up to me the slaves of Allah. Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you. And saying, be not proud against Allah. Lo! I bring you a clear warrant. And lo! I have sought refuge in my Lord and your Lord, lest you stone me to death. And if you put no faith in me, then let me go. And he cried unto his Lord (saying) these are guilty folk. Then his Lord said, take away my slaves by night. Lo! you will be followed. And leave the sea behind at rest, for lo! they are a drowned host. How many were the gardens and the watersprings that they left behind and cornlands and the goodly sites and pleasant things wherein they took delight! Even so (it was)! and We made it an inheritance for other folk and the heaven and earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved. And We delivered the children of Israel from the shameful doom. (We delivered them) from Pharaoh. Lo! he was a tyrant of the wanton ones.

(Al Dukhan: 17-31)

فَارَادَ أَنْ يَسْتَفِزَّهُمْ مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَّعَهُ جَمِيعًا () وَقُلْنَا
 مِنْ بَعْدِهِ لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اسْكُنُوا الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ جِئْنَا
 بِكُمْ لَغِيْفًا ()
 (بنی اسرائیل ع ۱۲)

And he wished to scare them from the land, but We drowned him and those with him, all together. And We said unto the Children of Israel after him, dwell in the land, but when the promise of the Hereafter cometh to pass, We shall bring thee as a crowd gathered out of various nations.

(Bani Israel: 103-104)

وَفِي مُوسَى إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ بِسُلْطَنٍ مُّبِينٍ () فَتَوَلَّى بِرُكْنِهِ وَقَالَ
 سِحْرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ () فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ ()
 (الذاریت ع ۲)

And in Musa (too there is a portent) when We sent him unto Pharaoh with clear warrant. But he withdrew confiding in his might, and said: a wizard or a mad man. So We seized him and his hosts, and flung them in the sea, for he was a reprobate.

(Al-Zurriyat: 38-40)

The Exodus gives many other details, including the names of places the Israelis encamped on their way to the sea. Summarised, its narrative is that when calamities and disasters followed one after another on Egypt as Allah's punishment and His portents came as Musa had warned, Pharaoh sent for him and told him that he must take the Israelis out of the country, but they would have to leave behind their animals. Musa refused to accept this condition, telling Pharaoh that he did not have the right to keep back even one animal. These words infuriated Pharaoh and he told Musa that now the Israelis would not be permitted to go, and that Musa may never appear before him in future, or he would be killed with his hands. Musa replied that Pharaoh was right that he would never come before his presence again. "This is my Allah's decision and He has told me that so great a calamity is about to come on you and your people that no first born of them will be left alive."

Musa came away from Pharaoh's court and told the Israelis that Pharaoh's heart had hardened, and he would not permit them to go until he saw some greater portent which would cause a panic among the Egyptians. But that they should prepare to leave as that time for their going away was near. He also told them that Allah directed him to tell the people that before going they

should offer sacrifices and observe an *eid el fasah* of which the rituals had also been taught him.

Musa also advised the Israelis to tell their women to go to the Egyptian women and borrow gold and silver ornaments and valuable clothes from them for celebrating the festival. These things were given. Then one night, it so happened that every child born in Egypt to Egyptians, from within the palace to the commoners, died. There was an uproar, the people rushed to Pharaoh and demanded of him that he turn the Israelis out of the country, so that they might be relieved of their curse.

Pharaoh then ordered Musa to take his people out of the country at once and also all their animals and other belongings. When the Israelis emerged from Ramesses, they numbered six hundred thousand besides the children and animals. When they left they could not return the ornaments and clothes they had borrowed, nor did the Egyptians ask them back.

The Israelis had gone quite far pitching camp at such places as Skat, then Eitam, then turning , at Majdal and, finally, between the forks of the seat at Hikrut before Lal Safoon. Allah being with them throughout the journey, a pillar of light by night and a shadowy cloud by day.

After they had left Egypt, some chiefs of Pharaoh came to him and expressed their regret that they had allowed such good servants and slaves to go away. Pharaoh ordered some of his army to go in pursuit of the Israelis, and riding chariots, as he led them, they hastened out. The sun was coming up when they came in sight of the Israelis.

When the Israelis saw the Egyptians so near them, they were afraid and began to argue with Musa. Musa consoled them, telling that it were they who would triumph, and that their enemy would be destroyed. Then he turned in prayer to Allah.

“And Musa said unto the people, fear ye not and stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will show you today; for the Egyptians you have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace”.

“And the Lord said unto Musa: wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the Children of Israel that they go forward, but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea and divide it; and the Children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea”.

“And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians , and they shall follow them; and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots and upon his horsemen”.

“And Musa stretched out his hand over the Sea and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided”.

“And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea and upon the dry ground. And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them. And Musa stretched forth his hand over the sea and the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them: there remained not so much as one of them. But the Children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And Israelies saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Musa”. (Exodus Ch. 14/ 13-31)

Except for some extra details given in the Exodus, there is complete correspondence between the account given in the Qur'an and the Exodus that gave the Israelis deliverance from their persecution and tyranny by means of a great miracle.

فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيمِ (الشعراء)

The waters were split and stood on either side like two great walls.
(al Shuara)

وَإِذْفَرَقْنَا بِكُمْ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

(بقره ع ٦)

And when We brought you through the sea and rescued you and drowned the folk of Pharaoh before your eyes.

(AL Baqar: 50)

Some additions in the Exodus may be interpolations, for instance, an easterly wind blowing all night. The Qur'an, however, as admitted by its opponents is an unaltered, original document.

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ

Falsehood cannot come to it from any side, from in front or from its back, it has been sent down by One Who is Wise, worthy of praise!

However it is possible that when Musa stretched his arm over the sea and struck it with his staff, first the waters divided, and then an easterly wind blew to dry up the ground so that the old and young as well as animals may walk over it without difficulty.

Unfortunately, among Muslims there are individuals who in the name of education confine every theme of religion to material limits, and deny those portents and miracles which came about to confirm the truthfulness of the prophets. We have already discussed the subject in the previous pages. They are influenced by the atheism and materialism of the West.

For them the drowning of Pharaoh was not brought about by any miracle but was the result of natural phenomena. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan who worked so hard for the material uplift of Muslims was unfamiliar with Arabic literature and books of religious knowledge, yet he dares to explain the phenomenon of the crossing over of the Israelis. He wanted to harmonise Islam with contemporary European life. But because materialism could not fit in with Islam he began to modify Islam, instead of altering materialism, but in this he could not succeed.

Islam is most definitely a religion that guides man in both his spiritual life as well as that of this world. That is why in every age all manner of arts and craft have developed in its very lap. Knowledge has been nourished under its very shadow. But material knowledge cannot go beyond the limits of material perception, a fact acknowledged by modern science. But what is beyond such perception is also not denied though not known.

There is no achievement of the physical sciences that contradicts anything in Islam, nor does Islam deny anything scientific. But because scientific discoveries and inventions keep changing from day to day, it is useless to try to force Islam to correspond with the physical sciences. They can never go beyond Islam.

Islam and most religions believe also in life beyond this world of matter, for instance, the Last Day, Heaven and Hell, Angels, Inspiration or *wahi*, Miracles, Prophethood, and asserts that none of these is unintelligible or impossible. But intelligence can comprehend only so far about them as Divine inspiration expiates. Intelligence has no means other than Divine inspiration.

Syed Ahmed Khan in his *Tafsir-e-Ahmadi* writes that Pharaoh's destruction was not the result of a miracle but that of the natural phenomenon of the ebb and flow of tides of the sea. The tide had receded when the Israelis crossed over to the other side. Seeing them go with such ease, Pharaoh ordered his men to pursue them and he had not gone far enough when the tide began to move and he was caught by the returning sea, unable to go forward or back. Syed Ahmed Khan has also given a map of the region to show that the Israelis crossed over at the northern mouths of the Red Sea. But the implications of the Qur'an deny this.

It is, of course, impossible to determine where exactly the crossing took place. The only record we have is the Old Testament, but the places mentioned there are no more than names for us. All we might say is whether the Israelis crossed over somewhere near the centre /middle or some shore or mouth? Let us look at a map of the Red Sea. This sea is a branch of the Arabian Sea to the east of which lies Arabia and Egypt on the west, and the branch forks at its northern extremity, one the Gulf of Aqaba and the other the Gulf of Suez. Between the two forks is the desert of Sinai. Not far from the northern extremity of the Gulf of Suez is the Mediterranean Sea and between the two waters is a narrow strip of land which in those days was convenient for travellers between Egypt and Canaan. (This strip is now traversed by an artificial canal, the Suez). But the Israelis on Divine command, did not take this route.

We should return to Surah-e-Baqar and Shu'ara. It is stated very clearly here that the sea waters were made to split in two and the waters on either side stood like mountains. *Fa kana kullu firqin ka-taud-ill azeem*. In Arabic the word *farq* means dividing in two parts, as parting the hair with a comb. *Faliq* is a crevice in a rock. *Taud* is a big mountain.

We conclude, then, that the waters were divided into two parts and water on either side became like two mountains and between them there was a dry path. This would be possible only if the Israelis crossed over at a point which was not the mouth or the front of the shore, but that part of water which could split to become two parts. In other words, the Israelis did not cross over into the Sinai plains by any part of the mouths of the Red Sea or its shore but by some middle part of the waters. Besides the ebb and flow of tides in a long stretch of water is always towards the mouth. It never happens that water ebbs away on both sides leaving a dry path in between. It is, therefore, wrong to interpret this great miracle contradict the Qur'an and amounts tampering with it.

The Exodus also confirms that the Israelis did not cross over at any point of the mouths but some middle part of the north-west. Some West-influenced agnostics, unable to sustain their denial of miracles, try to seek the support of the words of the Exodus that there blew a strong eastern wind which pushed the sea-water back making the path dry for Israelis to walk over. These people also say that the night long cold wind froze the waters but by the time Pharaoh came the rising sun melted the ice and he was drowned. But even so, as Najjar says, if this was what happened, it was still a miracle, because nowhere since the creation of the oceans had it happened that a wind should carve a dry path between waters. If this action of the wind was peculiar to Musa, then the deliverance of the Israelis and drowning of Pharaoh, what was it if not a miracle?

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ (١) إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ
فَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۗ وَمَا أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ (٢) يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ ۗ وَبِئْسَ الْوِرْدُ الْمَوْرُوْدُ (٣) وَأَتَّبَعُوا فِي هٰذِهِ
لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۗ بِئْسَ الرِّفْدُ الْمَرْفُوْدُ (٤) (هود ع ٩)

And verily We sent Musa with Our revelations and a clear warrant unto Pharaoh and his chiefs but they followed the command of Pharaoh and the command of Pharaoh was no right guide. He will go before his people on the Day of Resurrection and will lead them to the Fire for watering-place. Ah, hapless is the watering place (whither they are) led. A curse is made to follow them in this world and on the Day of Resurrection. Hapless is the gift (that will be) given them.
(Houd: 96-99)

وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اٰثْمَةً يَدْعُوْنَ اِلَى النَّارِ ۗ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَا يُنصَرُوْنَ (١)
وَأَتَّبَعْنٰهُمْ فِي هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً ۗ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ هُمْ مِّنَ الْمَقْبُوْحِيْنَ (٢)
(قصص ع ٤)

And We made them patterns that invite unto the Fire, and on the Day of Resurrection they will not be helped. And We made a curse to follow them in the world and on the Day of Resurrection they will be among the hateful.
(Al Qasas: 41-42)

وَحٰقَ بِالْفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ (١) النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا
وَعَشِيًّا ۗ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ ۗ اَدْخِلُوْا اِلَ فِرْعَوْنَ اَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ (٢)
(الى آخر الآيه) (مومن ع ٤)

While a dreadful doom encompassed Pharaoh's folk. The Fire, they are exposed to it in morning and evening and on the day when the hour upriseth, (it is said): Cause Pharaoh to enter the most awful doom.
(Momin 45-46)

إِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزُّقُومِ () طَعَامُ الْآثِمِ () كَالْمُهْلِ ۖ يَغْلِي فِي بُطُونِ ()
 كَغَلِي الْحَمِيمِ () خَذُوهُ فَاعْتَلُوهُ إِلَى سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ () ثُمَّ صَبُّوا فَوْقَ
 رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيمِ () ذُوقْ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ () إِنَّ هَذَا
 مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَمْتَرُونَ () (دخان ع ٣)

Lo! The tree of zaqqum, the food of the sinner, like molten brass, it melteth in their bellies; as the seething of boiling water. (And it will be said) Take him and drag him to the midst of hell; then pour upon his head the torment of boiling water; (saying) Taste! Lo! Thou wast forsooth the mighty, the noble !Lo! This is that whereof you used to doubt.

(Al Dukhan: 43)

The Exodus tells us that when the Israelis had crossed over the Red Sea into safety, and with their own eyes had seen the Pharaoh and his chariots and horsemen drown, and their bodies floating on the shore, it was but natural that they should rejoice. The women played on their timbrels, sang and danced. Then Musa turned to the people and admonished them that Allah had commanded him to tell them that it was He who had delivered them from a great torment, therefore, they should thank Him and serve Him and Him alone.

Musa led the people to Sinai by way of the wilderness of Shur. There they saw idolaters worshipping images, and they asked Musa that he should make them similar statues that they too might worship them in similar manner. Musa was infuriated and scolded them, putting them to shame that having just seen the great miracle of Allah the One, they had already forgotten His bounties and wished to worship idols!

National degradation -

Here we see a people that had for over four centuries been victims of slavery and persecution at the hands of tyrannical despots and their subjects. Then suddenly, as it were, there rises among them, like sunshine out of darkness, a clap of thunder and lightning a deliverer His proclamation of truth and guidance shakes the entire land and the king's palace quakes with terror.

In the presence of the world's most civilized power, he proclaims that he is a prophet of Allah the One, an emissary, come to demand the delivery of his people. Pharaoh confronts him from time to time with all his stately power, but every time suffers defeat and disgrace. Finally, there comes up before our eyes a picture of the triumph of truth and demolition of falsehood, the

drowning deep down of the forces of material power, and the hitherto victims of oppression, deprived of any worldly means, singing songs of joy and freedom!

This is that nation whose mentality and nature baffle understanding. It witnesses with its own eyes the battle of truth and falsehood, and truth triumphing, and with it, its own freedom; but in gratitude, the first demand it makes on its leader is that he make for them idols to worship!

It seems that though the Israelis were children of prophets and even today there could be found among them some traces inherited from their fathers, they had been through centuries of slavery in the midst of pagan ways which naturally affected them and made them demand of Musa that he give them idols to adore and worship.

وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ
لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ
تَجْهَلُونَ ° إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مَتَّبِعُوا مَا هُمْ فِيهِ وَبَاطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ()
قَالَ أَغْيَرَ اللَّهُ آبَغِيكُمْ إِلَهًا وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ()

(اعراف ع ١٦)

And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea, and they came unto a people who were given up to idols which they had. They said: O Musa! make for us a god like they have gods. He said: lo! you are a folk who know not. Lo! As for these, their way will be destroyed, and all that they are doing is in vain. He said: shall I seek for you a god other than Allah when He hath favoured you above (all) creatures?
(Al A'raaf: 138-140)

The ground Israeli's stepped on after crossing the Red Sea was the Arabian mainland, situated to the east of these waters. It is a barren land which, in the language of Bible, comprises the Shur wilderness, and the Sinai valley (Te`ha) and Mount Sinai (Toor). This is a region of great heat and water and greenery are not to be found for great distances. Musa prayed the Lord for water and he was commanded to strike his staff on the rocky ground. Twelve springs of water gushed forth, one for each of the twelve tribes into which this huge populace of Israelis was divided.³⁴

³⁴ Tafsir Ibn Kathir vol. 1, pp 95-96

Then there was the problem of food for which, again, Musa prayed, and, in answer Allah sent down manna, something that looked like white wafers of snow, and was delicious to eat; then, with a strong wind there came down flock after flock of quails, which the people caught and cooked as *salva*. This became their daily food, always fresh, without any trouble on their part, Allah warned them that none of this food may be stored up for the next day.

These two necessities of life assured, the Israelis now demanded shelter from the sun. For this Musa again prayed to Allah, Who sent layers of clouds to protect them. Wherever the Israelis went, the Israelis had the clouds above their heads.³⁵

This is also narrated by Suddi.

وَإِذَا سْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ ۖ فَانْفَجَرَتْ
مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا ۗ قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ ۗ كَلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا
مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ () (بقره ع ٧)

And when Musa asked for water for his people, We said, strike with thy staff the rock. And there gushed out therefrom twelve springs (so that) each tribe knew their drinking place. Eat and drink of that which Allah hath provided, and do not act corruptly, making mischief in the earth. - (Baqar: 60)

وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ ۗ كُلُوا مِنْ
طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ ۗ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ()
(بقره ع ٦)

And We caused the white cloud to overshadow you and sent down on you the manna and the quails (saying) eat of the good things wherewith we have provided you. We did not wrong them but they did wrong themselves. (Baqar : 57)

وَمِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَىٰ أُمَّةٌ يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ () وَقَطَّعْنَاهُمْ اثْنَتَيْ
عَشْرَةَ أَسْبَابًا أُمَمًا ۗ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ إِذِ اسْتَسْقَاهُ قَوْمُهُ ۖ أَنْ
اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ ۖ فَانْبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا ۗ قَدْ عَلِمَ

³⁵ Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol. 1 p. 97.

كُلُّ أَنَا سٍ مَّشَرَ بِهِمْ ۖ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَنَّ
وَالسَّلْوَى ۖ كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ ۖ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ()
(اعراف ع ٢٠)

And of Musa's people there is a community who lead with truth and establish justice therewith. We divided them into twelve tribes (nations); and We inspired Musa when his people asked him for water, saying, smite with thy staff the rock. And there gushed forth, therefrom, twelve springs. And We caused the white cloud to overshadow them and sent down for them the manna and the quails, saying, eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you. They wronged us not, but they were wrong to themselves.

(Al A'raaf: 159-160)

يَبْنَى إِسْرَآءِيلَ قَدْ أَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ عَدُوِّكُمْ وَوَعَدْنَاكُمْ جَانِبَ الطُّورِ
الْأَيْمَنِ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوَى () كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ
وَلَا تَطْغَوْا فِيهِ فَيَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبِي ۖ وَمَنْ يَحِلِّ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِي فَقَدْ
هُوَ () وَإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِمَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَى ()

(طه ع ٣)

O Children of Israel! We delivered you from your enemy and We made a covenant with you on the holy mountain's side, and sent down you the manna and quails, (saying): eat of the good things We have provided you, and transgress not in respect thereof lest My wrath come upon you, and he on whom My wrath cometh, he is lost, indeed. And lo! I am forgiving toward him who repenteth and believeth and doeth good, and afterward walked aright. (T'aha: 80,81,82)

Abdul Wahab Najjar writes that the springs of water mentioned in the narrative are not very far from Suez, and are known to this day as *Ayun-e-Moosa*, but they have dried up to a great extent, and some are not traceable, while there are some orchards of date-palms here and there. From the Qur'an it appears that obtaining water from the rocks by Musa striking his staff on them took place on several occasions, not just once.

Allah kept showering His blessings on the Israelis through Musa, and the Divine portents gave them the much needed reassurance after their degradation of outlook and moral character and lack of moral courage that had overtaken them because of centuries of slavery. But the effect was not far reaching enough on these peculiarly natured people. One day they gathered together to make a new demand. They said, "O Musa! we are tired of eating one kind of food everyday; we do not require manna and salva, so pray to thy Allah that He grow things like cucumbers, onions, garlic, beans and lentils from the earth for us to eat". Musa was greatly annoyed and he chided them for their stupidity telling them how foolish it was to desire such inferior things in place of such excellent food as Allah already gave them; that this was ingratitude and denying the Divine blessings. And, if they insisted on them it was not necessary to pray for them, like praying for portents, all that they needed to do was to go to some township or other habitation; and there these things would be found plentifully.

وَأَذَقْتُمْ يُمُوسَى لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَى طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا
مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّائِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا
قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَى بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ اهْبِطُوا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ
لَكُمْ مَأْسَأًا لَكُمْ

(بقره ع ٧)

And when you said: O Musa! we are weary of one kind of food, so call upon thy Lord for us that He bring forth for us of that which the earth groweth, of its herbs and its cucumbers, and its corn and its lentils and its onions. He said would ye exchange that which is higher for that which is lower? Go down to settled country: Thus you shall get that which ye demand.

(Al Baqar: 61)

SECLUSION ON Mt. SINAI-

Allah had promised Musa that after the Israelis were liberated, He would give them a Law to conduct themselves by. The time had now come and Divine inspiration directed Musa to go on Mount Sinai and worship Him there in seclusion. The period of the seclusion was to be one month, but was, later, increased by ten days, thus completing the forty-day period of what is known as *chillah*.

A Tradition recorded by Dailmi from Ibn Abbas tells us that when Musa had completed his thirty days of seclusion devotions, he began preparing for conversation with Allah. Since thirty days of fasting made his mouth smell,

and he did not consider it proper to communicate in such a state, he chewed a fragrant herb, but immediately inspiration reprimanded him from breaking his fast before communicating with Allah. Musa explained the reason why he had done so, and was directed to observe another ten days of seclusion, because, as he was told, with Allah the offensive breath of a fasting man was preferred to that of musk.³⁶ The Qur'an mentions only that the seclusion period was thirty days, and, later, increased to forty. The reason is not given.³⁷

وَوَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَمْنَاهَا بِعَشْرٍ فَتَمَّ مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً

(اعراف ع ١٧)

And when We did appoint for Musa thirty nights (of solitude) and added to them ten and he completed the whole time appointed by his Lord, of forty nights.

(Al A'raaf: 142)

Before going up to Sinai for secluded devotions, Musa charged his brother to keep the people on the path of rectitude, and look after them in all matters.

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ

(اعراف ع ١٧)

الْمُفْسِدِينَ ()

And Musa said unto his brother: take my place among the people; do right, and follow not the way of mischief-makers.

(Al A'raaf: 142)

TO SEE THE DIVINE BEING! –

After the conclusion of the forty nights of secluded devotions and honoured by a dialogue with the Supreme Being, Musa was so overcome emotionally that he prayed that having been blessed by the exultation of audience, he might also be blessed with the exultation of sight. But he received the answer, "O Musa! you do not possess the strength and capacity for seeing Me. But if you insist, We shall reveal a glimpse of Our light over that yonder mountain and if it can bear the glimpse, you may repeat your prayer to us. So Allah exposed a glimpse of Himself over a part of the mountain and it became a mass of dust, while on this side Musa fell to the ground senseless!

³⁶ Rooh ul Ma'ani, vol. 9. p. 38. But Dailmi is not looked upon as reliable by the authorities.

³⁷ The soofia have probably taken this as precedence for their practice of forty-day seclusion. Experience shows that to attain stability in any labour, the period of forty days is beneficial.

When he regained consciousness, he glorified the Lord, and alluding to his prayer, said, "I acknowledge and believe that there is no limit to the manifestation of Thy Beauty (*jamal*) or to mystic experience of Thee (*irfan*) or revelation of Thy Truth; whatever the shortcoming, it lies with my own being my humbleness and my helplessness."

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ، قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ
قَالَ لَنْ تَرَانِي وَلَكِنْ أَنْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ، فَسَوْفَ
تَرَانِي، فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَى صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا
أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ()

(اعراف ع ١٧)

And when Musa came to Our appointed trust and his Lord had spoken unto him, he said, My Lord! show me (Thy self) that I may gaze upon Thee. He said: thou wilt not see Me, but gaze upon the mountain! If it stand still in its place, then thou wilt see Me. And when his Lord revealed (His) glory to the mountain, He sent it crashing down, and Musa fell down senseless. And when he woke, he said: Glory unto Thee! I turn unto Thee repentant, and I am the first of the true believers. (Al A'raaf: 143)

REVELATION OF THE TORAH –

After this mutually secret meeting, Allah granted the Torah to Musa, commanding him to adhere to it with firmness, and to tell his people that they act upon it in such a manner that the good deed which brings one nearer to Allah is given preference over any other. That in this Book Allah had explained in detail everything for their welfare, made clear distinction between the permissible and the forbidden, the wholesome and the defective, and what must be done and what must not be done. This was Allah's *shariah* for them.

قَالَ يُوسَى إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَتِي وَبِكَلَّمَائِي فَخُذْ مَا
آتَيْتُكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ () وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَابِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
مَوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ، فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَأْخُذُوا
بِأَحْسَنِهَا سَأُرِيكُمْ دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ()

(اعراف ع ١٧)

He said: O Musa! I have preferred thee above mankind by My message and by My speaking (unto thee) . So hold that which I have given thee, and be among the thankful. And We wrote for him upon the tablets the lesson to be drawn from all things and the explanation of all things, then (bade him) hold it fast; and command thy people (saying take the better course made clear) therein. I shall show thee the abode of evil livers.
(Al A'raaf: 144, 145)

Here, two points should be considered:

1. Muslim scholars say that the commands given on Mt. Sinai comprise the Torah; but the present Christians scholars assert that implied are the Ten Commandments which in the Hebrew religion are called the *shariah* or the Covenant. For instance, thou shalt serve the Lord, thy Allah alone; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal, etcetera. (Exodus: Ch. 24 verse 28).

Some contemporary scholars take the verse to imply the commands of the Covenant. But in the light of both the Qur'an and the Torah, this is not correct; the former view is the correct one, because in Surah-e-Baqar, the Qur'an, speaking of Musa's secluded devotions, defines the revealed commands as a "Book and a Distinguisher" (*kitab* and *furqan*), two qualities of the Torah, not of the commands of the Covenant.

وَأذُوَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَنتُمْ
ظَالِمُونَ () ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِّن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ()
وَإِذَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ () (بقره ع ٦)

And when We did appoint for Musa forty nights (of solitude), and then you chose the calf, when he had gone from you, and were wrong-doers. Then even after that, We pardoned you, in order that you might give thanks. And when We gave unto Musa the Scripture and the Criterion (of all right and wrong) that you might be led aright.

(Al Baqar: 51-54)

Similarly it is stated in another place:-

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ الْأُولَىٰ بَصَآئِرَ
لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ () (قصص ع ٥)

And We verily gave the Scripture unto Musa after We had destroyed the generations of old, clear testimonies for mankind, and a guidance and a mercy, that haply they might reflect.
(Al Qasas: 41)

Although in Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah, three of the several Books of Torah or the Bible, the word 'Covenant' or 'law' is to be found, Maulana Rehmat ullah Kairanvi, in his famous book Izhar ul Haq, has proved by reference to old Persian, Arabic and Urdu translations, that the word 'Torah' is used in these Books of the Bible, instead of the two words. Maulana Abdul Haq has quoted references from Urdu and Persian translations of the Bible, published in 1845 and 1839, to show that

i. *وہ آں سچھا تمامی کلمات ایں تورات را بظن روشن ہو لیس .*

(Deuteronomy Ch. 27//28)

ii. "The Children of Israel, on a command of Musa, made a sacrificial altar, and inscribed the Torah on its stones."
(Isaiah 8 / 15) (1845 AC)

These references clearly show that the tablets given to Musa after his forty nights of secluded devotions were those of the Tora not of the commands contained in the covenant. If the word "law" used in English translations and "shariah" in the Arabic and Urdu translation be taken as correct, in its comprehensive meaning, it will be found applicable to the Torah. Torah, shariah and law are synonymous. This has been the meaning taken by early christians, the covenant is but a part of the Tora. To give it a separate position is a later development.

2. In one of the Verses of the Qur'an quoted above, are the words: "*Soon I will show you the abode of the evil-doers.*" What is that abode?

The opinion of some people is that (i) the ruins of A'ad and Thamud are implied. (ii) Egypt, as the Israelis would enter Egypt again. (iii) According to Qatada, the abode is the sacred land of Syria, which, at that time, was ruled by the despotic lineage of Amaliqa monarchs, and where the Isrealis would be going.³⁸ Najjar prefers this last meaning. I agree that it is the correct one.

Musa died before he could enter these habitations. The elderly among the Isrtealis, as will shortly be seen, were also forbidden entering there. This means that the Verse means either that all the youth of the Israelis, who were the majority, would go there or that Musa had sent Joshua b. Nun and Caleb b. Jephneuh

³⁸ Rooh ul Ma'ani: vol. 5 p 53

and some other valiant Israelis to the holy land to find out the conditions prevailing there so that Israelis may prepare themselves accordingly to defeat the enemy for going into the holy land. And they went and brought the required information to Musa and the Israelis. This means that the Verse refers to this matter.

The former comment is preferable to Qatada's because the Israelis never again went to Egypt as a group or community. And the second is not acceptable because although the ruins of Thamud are near the Sinai valley, those of A'ad are in the west of Arabia, a distance of several months of journey from the Sinai valley. There is no reason why the Israelis should have been sent there only to see these forgotten ruins and Allah's promise stated with such grandeur. Yet another comment is that the Verse implies gehennam.³⁹

Be that as it may, Musa was granted the Torah and, at the same time, it was clearly stated that "Our law" is that when people continue to act foolishly and follow the wrong path of their fathers and persists in it even after the guidance has come to them with clear signs and arguments, then Allah also leaves them in their wrong ways and they have no place in the message of truth because out of their arrogance and rebellious mentality they rejected the invitation to Truth. Says the Qur'an:

سَاصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِي الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كَلِمًا آيَةً لَّا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَّا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ () وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ يُحْزَنُونَ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ () (اعراف ع ١٧)

I shall turn away from My revelations those who magnify themselves wrongfully in the earth, and if they see each token, believe it not, and if they see the way of righteousness, choose it not for (their) way; and if they see the way of error, choose it for (their) way. That is because they deny Our revelations and are used to disregard them. Those who deny Our revelations and the meeting of the hereafter, their works are fruitless. Are they requited ought save what they used to do? (Al A'raaf: 146-147)

³⁹ Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol 2, Surah e A'raaf

COW WORSHIP EPISODE -

At this time another incident took place, both astonishing and regrettable, which shows up the moral degradation of the Israeli people. While Musa was away on Mt. Horeb or Sinai receiving the Divine Law, Tora, the Israelis led by Samiri chose their own god, the image of a calf, and began worshipping it.

The majority of commentators say that when Musa was leaving for secluded devotions on Horeb or Sinai, he told the Israelis, that he would be away for a month, after which, he would return immediately, and that meanwhile Haroon would look after them. But Musa stayed away for ten days beyond one month.

This delay was taken advantage of by one, Samiri, who, seeing the people uneasy and disturbed by Musa's absence, told them to bring him the ornaments they had borrowed from the Egyptians and were unable to return them, he would do something very useful for them.

Though Samiri was outwardly a Muslim, his heart was full of unbelief and *shyrik*. When the ornaments were brought to him, he melted them to make an image of a heifer, and put into it a handful of dust, which gave it a semblance of life and it began to bleat. Samiri now said to the people, "Musa made a mistake that he went to a mountain looking for Allah. Your god is here, right before your eyes."

We have already shown in these pages that centuries of slavery had steeped them with heathen beliefs and practices. Cow-worship was an ancient Egyptian cult, a very important part of their religion. One of their great gods was Horus whose face was like that of a cow, and they believed that the earth rested on the head of a cow.⁴⁰ So when Samiri proposed to them that they worship the image he had made, they accepted without any difficulty.

Haroon advised them not to do so, for it was the way of misguidance. But they refused to obey him, and told him that not till Musa returned, would they desist. When things had reached to such a pitch here, Allah decided to inform Musa about it. He asked Musa why he had left his people in such a haste and come to Him. Musa replied that he wished to meet Him quickly in order to obtain guidance for the people. Allah told him that the people for whose guidance he was so anxious, was indulging in such and such misguidance.

On hearing this, Musa was filled with remorse and anger, and he hurried back to the people. "What have you done?" he said to them. "I was not delayed so much that you should have committed such a monstrosity." He trembled with

⁴⁰ It seems that all idolatrous people venerated the cow and worshipped it, notably, India, Iraq, China, Japan and Persia.

rage as he spoke, and the tablets of the Torah fell from his hands. The Israelis pleaded that it was none of their fault; that Samiri asked for the load of Egyptian ornaments they were carrying about and he made an idol of it and misguided them.

Shyrk (plurality of Divinity) is intolerable to prophets. For this reason and also because he was hot-tempered, Musa caught hold of Haroon by the neck and was about to pull at his beard, when Haroon pleaded: I am not to blame at all: I did my best to make them understand in every way but they refused to listen and told me bluntly that until Musa returned they would not heed my word. They even found me weak and planned to kill me. This would have led to bloodshed between the true believers and the others, which I wished to avoid at all costs, and the blame that it was I who caused the split. I, therefore, considered it wise to remain quiet and wait for you. Do not pull the hair of my head or beard and give the people occasion to laugh!

Musa now turned to Samiri and questioned him about the idol he had made. Samiri said, "I saw what no Israeli ever saw. When Pharaoh was about to be drowned I saw that Gabriel, riding a horse, stood between the Israelis and Pharaoh's hosts, and I noticed that wherever his horse stepped, the dust of its hoof showed signs of life and verdure cropped up out of dry ground. So I picked up a handful of the dust of the horse's steps which, now, I threw into the heifer I made, and it began to bleat!" Musa said, "The punishment for you in this life is that you shall wander about like a mad man, and if anyone comes near you, you shall say to him, 'Do not touch me'. This is your punishment in this world, and in the hereafter your punishment shall be that as promised by Allah for the disobedient and astray. "And now also see, that right now we shall reduce to dust the heifer you made for a god, and cast the dust into the sea, so that you may know and your followers may know that the power of your god is such that far from saving others, it cannot save itself from destruction". "You unfortunates! You could not understand even so small a matter that your Allah is only that One Being who has no associates and is Knower of all things":

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ
ظَالِمُونَ () وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا
آتَيْنَكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَسْمِعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَشْرَبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ
الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ إِيمَانُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ()

(بقره ع ١١)

And Musa came to you with clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), yet, while he was away, ye chose the calf (for worship) and ye were wrong doers. And when We made with you a Covenant and caused the mount to tower above you (saying) hold fast by that which We have given you, and hear (Our word), they said, we hear and we rebel! and worship of the calf was made to sink into their hearts because of their rejection (of the Covenant). Say (unto them), evil is that which your belief enjoineth on you, if you are believers.
(Al Baqar: 92-93)

وَاتَّخَذَ قَوْمٌ مُّوسَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ حُلِيِّهِمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا آلِهَ ۚ خَوَارِٔ
 اَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا مَّ اتَّخَذُوهُ وَكَانُوا
 ظٰلِمِيْنَ () وَلَمَّا سَقَطَ فِيْ اَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَاَوْا اَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوْا ۗ قَالُوْا الَّذِيْنَ
 لَمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ () وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُّوسَىٰ
 اِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ اَسْفًا ۗ قَالَ بِسْمَا خَلَفْتُمُوْنِيْ مِنْ بَعْدِيْۗ اَعَجَلْتُمْ
 اَمْرًا رَبِّكُمْ ۗ وَالْقَى الْاِلٰهَ لُوٰحٍ وَاَخَذَ بِرَاسِ اَخِيْهِ يَجْرُهُ ۗ اِلَيْهِ ۗ قَالَ ابْنَ اُمَّ
 اِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضَعُّوْنِيْ وَكَادُوْا يَاقْتُلُوْنِيْ فَا تَشْمِتُ بِيَ الْاَعْدَاءَ وَلَا
 تَجْعَلْنِيْ مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ () قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَلِاٰخِيْ وَاَدْخِلْنَا فِيْ
 رَحْمَتِكَ وَاَنْتَ اَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيْمِيْنَ () اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا الْعِجْلَ سَيِّئًا
 لَهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي
 الْمُفْتِرِيْنَ () وَالَّذِيْنَ عَمِلُوْا السَّيِّاَتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوْا مِنْ بَعْدِهَا وَاٰمَنُوْا ۗ اِنَّ
 رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ () وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُّوسَى الْغَضَبُ
 اَخَذَ الْاِلٰهَ لُوٰحٍ ۗ وَفِيْ نُسْخَتِهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ
 يَرْهَبُوْنَ ()

(اعراف ع ١٨)

And the folk of Musa after (he had left them) chose a calf (for worship), (made) out of their ornaments, of saffron hue, which gave a lowing sound. Saw they not that it spake not unto them nor guided them to any way? They chose it and became wrongdoers. And when they feared the consequences

thereof and saw that they had gone astray, they said, unless our Lord have mercy on us and forgive us, we verily are of the lost. And when Musa returned unto his people, angry and grieved, he said, evil is that (course) which ye took after I had left you. Would you hasten on you the judgement of your Lord? And he cast down the tablets and he seized his brother by the head dragging him toward him. He said, son of my mother! Lo! The folk did judge me weak and almost killed me. Oh! make not mine enemies to triumph over me and place me not among the wrong doers! He said, my Lord! have mercy on me and my brother: bring us into Thy mercy. Thou the most merciful of those who show mercy. Lo! those who chose the calf (for worship), terror from their Lord, and humiliation will come upon them in the life of the world. Thus do We requite those who invent a lie. But those who do ill deeds and afterward repent and believe, lo! for them afterward Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. Then when the anger of Musa abated, he took up the tablets, and in their inscription there was guidance and mercy for all those who fear their Lord. (Al A'raaf: 148-154)

وَمَا أَعْجَلَكَ عَنِ قَوْمِكَ يُوسَىٰ () قَالَ هُمْ أُولَاءِ عَلَىٰ أَثَرِي
وَعَجَلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضَىٰ () قَالَ فَإِنَّا قَدْ فَتَنَّا قَوْمَكَ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ
وَأَضَلَّهُمُ السَّامِرِيُّ () فَرَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا () قَالَ
يَقَوْمِ أَلَمْ يَعِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ وَعَدًّا حَسَنًا أَفَطَالَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَهْدُ أَمْ أَرَدْتُمْ
أَنْ يَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُمْ مَوْعِدِي () قَالُوا مَا
أَخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ بِمَلِكِنَا وَلَكِنَّا حُمَلْنَا أَوْزَارًا مِّنْ زِينَةِ الْقَوْمِ فَقَدْ فَتَنَّا
فَكَذَلِكَ أَلْقَى السَّامِرِيُّ () فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ
فَقَالُوا هَذَا إِلَهُكُمْ وَإِلَهُ مُوسَىٰ ° فَنَسِيَ () أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ
قَوْلًا ° وَلَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا () وَلَقَدْ قَالَ لَهُمْ هُرُونُ مِنْ قَبْلُ
يَقَوْمِ إِنَّمَا فُتِنْتُمْ بِهِ ° وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ فَاتَّبِعُونِي وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرِي ()
قَالُوا لَنْ نَبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عَكِفِينَ حَتَّىٰ يَرْجِعَ إِلَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ () قَالَ يَهْرُونَ
مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوا () الْآتِبِعِنِ أَفَعَصَيْتَ أَمْرِي () قَالَ

يَنْوُمٌ لَّا تَأْخُذُ بِلِحْيَتِي وَلَا بِرَأْسِي ۗ إِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تَقُولَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ
 بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِي ۙ () قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ يَا مِرْيُ ()
 قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا بِهِ فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُولِ
 فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِي نَفْسِي ۙ () قَالَ فَاذْهَبْ فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي
 الْحَيَاةِ أَنْ تَقُولَ لَا مِسَاسَ ۚ وَإِنَّ لَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَّنْ تَخْلَفَنَّهُ ۚ وَأَنْظُرْ إِلَى
 إِلْهِكَ الَّذِي ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا لَّنُحَرِّقَنَّهُ ۚ ثُمَّ لَنَنْسِفَنَّهُ فِي الْيَوْمِ
 نَسْفًا () إِنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَسِعَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ()
 (طه ٤، ٥)

And (it was said): ' what hath made thee hasten from thy folk. Q Musa? He said: They are close upon my track. I hastened unto Thee that Thou mightest be well pleased. He said: Lo! We have tried thy folk in thy absence and as Samiri hath misled them. Then Musa went back unto his folk, angry and sad. He said, O my people! Hath not your Lord promised you a fair promise? Did the time appointed then appear too long for you, or did ye wish that wrath from your Lord should come upon you, that you broke the tryst with me? They said: We broke not the tryst with thee of our own will, but we were laden with ornaments of the folk, then cast them (in the fire), for thus as Samiri proposed. Then he produced for them a calf of saffron hue, which gave forth a lowing sound. And they cried: This is your God and the God of Musa, but he hath forgotten. See they not then that it returneth no saying unto them and possesseth for them neither hurt nor use? And Haroon indeed had told them beforehand: O my people! Ye are but being seduced therewith, for lo! your Lord is the Beneficent, so follow me and obey my order. They said: We shall by no means cease to be its votaries till Musa return unto us. He (Musa) said: O Haroon! What held thee back when thou didst see them gone astray that thou followedst me not? Hast thou then disobeyed my order? He said, O son of my mother! Clutch not my beard nor my head! I feared lest thou shouldst say, Thou hast cast division among the Children of Israel, and hast not waited for my word. (Musa) said: What hast thou to

say, O Samiri? I perceived what they perceive not, so I seized a handful from the footsteps of the messenger and then threw it in. Thus my soul commended to me. (Musa) said: Then go! And lo! in this life it is for thee to say: Touch me not. And lo! there is for thee a tryst thou can not break. Now look upon thy god of which thou hast remained a votary, Verily we shall burn it and scatter its dust over the sea. Your God is only Allah, than Whom there is no other God. He embraceth all things in His knowledge!

(Taha: 83-98)

Of the Verses quoted here, the one which is the subject of discussion among commentators, is

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ يَا مِيرِي () قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا بِهِ
فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُولِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِي نَفْسِي ()
(طه ع ٥)

(Musa) said: And what hast thou to say, O Samiri? He said, I perceived what they perceive not, so I seized a handful from the dust of the messenger, and then threw it in. Thus my soul commended to me. (Taha: 95-96)

Certain points in this Verse are under discussion on the result of which depends the commentary of the whole incident:

1. What did Samiri see that others, the Israelis, did not see?
2. What does *qabad-tu qabdata* mean?
3. Who exactly is implied as messenger, Musa or Gabriel, in the words *asar-il rasool*?
4. What does *nabaz-ta-ha* indicate?

Although from the details already given in these pages we know the opinion of the majority of our commentators, we may quote the concise wording of Shah Abdul Qadir Dehlavi:

“At the moment when the Children of Israel stepped on the split sea, Pharaoh with his hosts following also stepped in behind, but Gabriel came between the two to prevent the latter from reaching the former. Samiri recognised Gabriel and picked up a handful of dust from under his feet, which now he cast into the golden calf. The gold had been taken from the unbelievers. By deception the dust of blessings went into it. Truth and falsehood mixed to create a

miracle that the sound of a living thing emerged from it. Such things should be avoided because it increases idolatry.”

Referring to this commentary, the author of *Rooh ul Ma'ani* says:

“Of the Verse this is the commentary which is quoted from the Companions, their successors and followers of their successors and revered commentators.”⁴¹

Opposed to this commentary is that of the famous non-conformist Abu Muslim Isphahani, who says: The Verse means that Samiri answered Musa: ‘As against the Children of Israel it occurred to me that you were not in the right but at the same time I also followed you a little. But my heart did not allow me to persist in this and, finally, I gave up even my little obedience, which my conscience told me was the better thing to do’.

In other words, according to Abu Muslim, the Verse, *fa basur-tu bi-ma-lam yab sur-u bihi* means that as opposed to the Isrealis, Samiri did not look upon Musa as being on the right path; and the word *rasool* in *qabad-tu qabdata min asar-il rasool* indicates Musa; and *usar il Rasool* implies obedience and following; and *qabdata* is ‘a little obedience’, and *fata baz-tu-ha* is renunciation of obedience’.

Abu Muslim also refers to Arabic lexicon authorities for his support, and imposed some confusion on the details given by the majority. To this Syed Mahmood Aaloosi has replied in detail in his Commentary.

However, Imam Razi looks upon Abu Muslim’s version as strong, preferable and correct. He says: “Let it be understood that although Abu Muslim’s commentary contradicts the other commentators, but for reasons given below, his commentary is to be preferred.”⁴²

Among the contemporary ulema, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his *Tarjuman ul Qur'an* also concurs with Abu Muslim.

In the context of the Qur'an and going through the Traditions we do not find any words of the Prophet ﷺ that would be decisive in establishing which of the two commentaries is correct. Probably, it is for this reason that although the famous Traditionist and commentator Hafiz Imamuddin Ibn Kathir, having before him all the *riwayah*, supports the majority opinion, he does not give it the position which the author of *Rooh ul Ma'ani* gives, namely, to say that the majority commentary is proved by the Traditions, and, therefore, the other version is heresay. All he says after his commentary is:

⁴¹ *Rooh ul Ma'ani*: vol 16 p.229.

⁴² Vol. 2 p. 70

هذا هو المشهور عند كثير من المفسرين او اكثرهم -

(جلد ۳ سورہ طہ)

"This commentary is well known by reference to many, in fact, most commentators" (Vol. 3 Surah e Taha)

Similarly, although his contemporary the famous commentator Ibn Hayan has quoted Abu Muslim by using the word '*qeela*, he has not written a single word against it.⁴³

Briefly, although these illustrious commentators prefer the commentary of the majority, they do not aver that the other view is atheistic or heretic.

However, it cannot also be doubted that the style of the Qur'an and the context in which the verse occurs, both refute Abu Muslim's version and show it up as nothing more than an unnecessary elaboration. To take physical seeing to mean the heart's vision, in the phrase *ba surtu bi ma-lamyah* is highly improper; and so also to use the words *al rasool* while speaking to Musa, or "take a handful", *qabat-u qabdata* to imply "a little obedience", or "renounce all obedience", *nabaz-tu-ha*, may be correct if used as separate phrases and may be current in Arabic idiom, but in the context as a whole they render Abu Muslim's version as void. The context as a whole proves that the majority version is the preferable one.

The question, on principle, arises here is that if all that Samiri had intended to say was they had followed Musa as a temporary convenience and now renounced even that much, where was the need for the Qur'an to use such meaningful and ambiguous phraseology that, as Maulana Azad points out, commentators got the opportunity to stick a story, well-known among Israelis, squarely on the Verse under consideration. Thus the majority version is not of Jewish origin but a clear statement of the Qur'an. It points out that Samiri's reply to Musa must be with reference to some incident that was both astonishing and could also be used to misguide people of wrong inclinations.

There remains the question as to how such a strange incident took place through an hypocritic unbeliever? The best answer is that given in Abdul Qadir's commentary, already quoted above, namely, that when a falsehood is compounded with a truth, something miraculous emerges from the admixture, which is called the essence of it, its basic characteristic. For instance, if you mix a perfume of roses with some filth, the mixed smell of both will produce

⁴³ When an opinion is considered weak, it is commenced by the word *qeela*, meaning 'it is said'

north was Sumerian. From the name of these people the city known to ancient history as Samirah was founded, and also Ur, where a palace has recently been discovered in Tel Aviv together with five-thousand-year old ornaments and gold utensils.”

What was the origin of the Sumeri peoples?

No definite answer can be given. The library of Ashuri Pal (d. 666 BC) discovered in Ninevah contains also tablets of a lexicon that gives word equivalents of Akadi and Sumerian languages. There is no great difference in the phonetics. Perhaps, these phonetics were closely related at some distant date with these tribes for whom we have adopted the Sumerian phraseology of the Torah.

However, Iraq was the original home of the Sumerians but they had spread over distant regions. According to recent investigation, they were found in Egypt one millenium before Christ. It seems that one individual from among these people had become a follower of Musa, and left Egypt with the Israelis. The Qur'an refers to him as *al Samiri* Cow, bull and calf were held sacred by Sumerians and Egyptians alike.

(Tarjuman ul Qur'an: Vol. 2, pp. 464=465)

After considering both versions it will be decided that Abul Kalam Azad's commentary is preferable to Najjar's which is too far fetched.

If the meaning of the word Samir is 'guardian', why was this man named Samiri. An answer to this question is not provided in the commentary.

The answer with its historical references, given by Azad to the query put by the Christians is correct.

Musa now turned to Allah and asked Him what punishment He would like to propose for these renegades. Musa was commanded that they must forfeit their lives. Nisai quotes a Tradition to the effect that there was only one way for Israelis to show their repentance, namely that the guilty one should be disposed of by the nearest of his kin: the father by the son, the son by the father, the brother by his brother and so on. The Israelis had to submit to this command. The Old Testament tells us that three-thousand were killed, while some Muslim narratives state the number to be much more.

Musa now fell prostrate before Allah and prayed for mercy and compassion for the sinners, and his prayer was accepted, and both killer and killed were forgiven and also all the living sinners; and he was directed to advise them that they must never, never even come near to associating partners with the Divine Being, *shyrk*.

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ أِفْ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُعْبَدُوا دُونِ اللَّهِ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنُونَ
فَتَوَابُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِئِهِمْ فَأَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِئِكُمْ ۗ
فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (١) (بقره ع ٦)

And when Musa said unto his people: Ye have wronged yourselves by your choosing of the calf (for worship, so turn in penitence to your Creator, and kill the guilty yourselves. That will be best for you with your Creator, and He will relent toward you. Lo! He is the Relenting, the Merciful.

(al-Baqar: 54)

On this subject, there is a great difference between the Qur'an and the Old Testament of the Bible. The Exodus states that the idol of the calf was made by Haroon. "And when the people saw that Musa delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Haroon, and said unto him, up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Musa, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what has become of him. And Haroon said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, and of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people broke off their golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Haroon. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving-tool, after he had made it a molten calf, And they said: These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Haroon saw it, he built an altar before it, and Haroon made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord."

(Exodus: 32/ 1-5)

What can be greater proof that the Bible has been tampered with, distorted and interpolated from time to time than the fact that the very personages it holds out as prophets of Allah, it does not hesitate to label as guilty of idolatry and immoral deeds. Here, too, Samiri's *shyrik* is passed on to Haroon. The Qur'an emphatically refutes this, and tells us that Haroon is clear of all such uncleanness. Making the calf and urging people to worship it was Samiri's work, not Haroon's. Haroon did his best to keep the people away from such gross misbehaviour, but they would not listen to him.

وَلَقَدْ قَالَ لَهُمْ هَارُونُ مِنْ قَبْلُ يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا فُتِنْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ
الرَّحْمَنُ فَاتَّبِعُونِي وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرِي (١) قَالُوا لَنْ نَبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عَكِفِينَ
حَتَّىٰ يَرْجِعَ إِلَيْنَا مُوسَى (١) (طه ع ٥)

And Haroon had indeed told them, beforehand, O my people! Ye are but being seduced therewith, for lo! your Lord is the Beneficent; so follow me and obey my order. They said, we shall by no means cease to be its votaries till Musa return to us.
(Ta'ha: 90, 91)

SELECTION OF SEVENTY REPRESENTATIVES –

When the Israelis were forgiven their great sin, Musa said to them: “These Tablets you see with me are the Book which Allah on High has granted me for your guidance in your affairs of this world as well as your salvation in the Hereafter. This is the Tora. It is now obligatory on you to believe in it and obey its commands.

But the Israelis being what they were, said, “How can we believe that it is Allah’s Book? Certainly not by your mere saying it. We will believe only after we have seen Allah plainly with our own eyes, and He tells us that this Tora is His Book.”

Musa tried to make them understand that theirs was a foolish demand. “No one has ever seen Allah with these eyes, nor can you.” But the Israelis persisted on their condition, Musa then thought and said, “It is not possible for hundreds of thousands to go up with me on the mountain, to confirm my words. But I can select some representatives of yours to go up with me, and, if on their return they confirm my words, then you will have to believe and submit. And because you have just been punished for the great sin of worshipping a cow, this is an opportunity for you to express your shame and to promise good deeds before Allah” The people agreed.

Musa selected seventy chiefs from among all the tribes and took them to the Sinai. Here a light in the form of a white cloud surrounded Musa, and his dialogue with Allah commenced. Musa prayed, “O Allah! Thou art the Seer and Knower of the condition in which the Israelis are. I have chosen seventy of them and brought them here with me. How good it would be if they too heard Thy words and mine with their own ears in this veil of light and returned to the people qualified to confirm me!”

Allah accepted Musa’s prayer and the seventy were admitted to the veil of light. They heard the dialogue, but as soon as the light was lifted up, and they and Musa confronted one another, they again persisted that unless they saw Allah unveiled they would not believe. This persistence was punished forthwith, and a fearful earthquake, lightning and thunderclap seized them and destroyed them to ashes.

Seeing this, Musa again turned humbly in prayer and said, “O Allah! If these fools have acted in a foolish manner, wilt Thou destroy us all? O Allah! Out of Thy mercy Forgive them!”

described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and forbid for them only the foul; and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear. Then those who believe in him and honour him, and help him and follow the light which is sent down with him, they are the successful. (al A'raaf: 155-157)

وَأَذَقْتُمْ مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَىٰ اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذْتُمُ
الصَّاعِقَةَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ (١) ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُونَ (١)

And when you said, O Musa, we will not believe in Thee till we see Allah plainly, and even while ye gazed the lightning seized you. Then We revived you after your extinction that you might give thanks. (al Baqar: 55-57)

LIFE AFTER DEATH –

The general rule, as stated by the Qur'an, is that after death, life will be given only for the Hereafter, but sometimes, for special reasons, it may please the Divine Being to give life to the dead in this very world. Of this there is abundant proof in the miraculous lives of the prophets, as witnessed by the Qur'an.

When the Qur'an speaks of life after death it uses the word *ba-asa*; in plain English, 'come to life'.

In the Verse just quoted above from Surah e Baqar, the representatives of the Israelis came to life again after their extinction, and by the words, "that you might give thanks", special emphasis is added to the incident that when they were done to death on their audacious and rude persistence by an earthquake, and then Allah's vast mercy had compassion on them and gave them new life, after Musa humbly prayed for them, in order that they might be grateful, and never again be stubborn but be always truly obedient to Allah.

After this explanation, it will be easy to understand that the interpretation which our contemporary scholars have advanced with inappropriate elucidation to escape commenting on life after death, is not correct. They sacrifice the explicit, unambiguous style and wording of the Qur'an to their own opinion.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MERCY FOR ALL —

The words of Surah e A'raaf : *qala azabi usibu bi-hi mun aasha-ua rehmati wasi-at kulla shay-in* are among the *mahmaat e Qur'ani* p.508. Here we are told that the punishment that comes from Allah is because of certain conditions, otherwise punishment is not an attribute of Allah on High. His eternal and unchangeable attribute is mercy. Therefore, His attribute of mercy encompasses all things. In other words, what you say is punishment, is relative to your deeds, otherwise in this sphere of *being*, taking the universe as a whole, it is all but mercy, if you think deeply enough.

In Surah-e-al An-aam we have: *kataba ala nafsi-hi rehmata*

The everlasting, perfect manifestation of this mercy is that blessed personage who is mentioned in al A'raaf, that before his coming his advent had been announced and whose attributes, too, and character had been mentioned, and, in another place, was described as *Rahmat al lil aalamin* -- "Mercy for all the Worlds."⁴⁶

ISRAELIS AND MOUNT SINAI ---

When the seventy Israeli leaders returned to the people, they narrated all the incidents to them, and bore witness that without doubt whatever Musa said was the truth and he was indeed a sent one of Allah.

The demand of an upright nature now was that the people should have thanked Allah and bowed their heads in obedience to Him. But the Israelis persisted in their crooked ways, and in spite of the testimony of their representatives, made excuses for evading the Torah and gave no heed to what Musa had to say.

Seeing this attitude of theirs, Musa turned to Allah, complaining of their refusal to walk straight. Allah told Musa that He would grant him yet another token. "The Mount on which thou hast been speaking with Me, and on which the leaders of thy people have witnessed the truth, I shall command that same Mount to move from its place and overshadow the Israelis and announce to them that Musa is a true prophet of Allah, and the Torah is, in truth, Allah's Book; and if this were not the truth, you would not be seeing this tremendous portent, which only Allah could have produced, and would be impossible otherwise."

As soon as Allah decided on this action, Mount Sinai moved over their heads, like a canopy taking them under its shadow, and spoke to them, saying: "You Children of Israel, if there is any sense left in you and you can distinguish

⁴⁶ Detailed elucidation of this Verse will be given on the relevant chapter on the Prophet.

even a little between falsehood and truth, then listen to my words: that I speak to you as a portent of Allah: I bear witness that Musa has been honoured time and again on my back with having conversed with Allah, the law of guidance for you has been delivered for you on my back; and, O you, intoxicated with the wine of indifference and rebellion! this changed state of mine which is so astonishing for you, is to prove that when the softness of heart in the human breast, changes to hardness, it becomes a piece of rock, even harder than rock, and guidance cannot penetrate it in any manner whatsoever. Look! I am made up of pieces of rock, but how I stand here with head down humbly showing my obedience to Allah! And here you are who out of pride and egotism, refuse to change your denial with acceptance!

How true, as the Qur'an says:"

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبَكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً ()

(بقره ع ٩)

Your hearts became hardened, like rocks, even harder"

When the Israelis saw this portent, they promised Musa, whether as a result of fear or conviction following the witnessing of such a tremendous portent, to act by the Torah.

And Allah now turned to them commanding them that they hold on fast to what had been given them as a law of guidance and act upon the commands stated therein, so that they become righteous and pure!

But a thousand pities! The Covenant made by the Israelis proved to be temporary and they did not stand by it for long. In line with their habit, they again began to do things in violation of the Divine Law. The Qur'an describes this very briefly but in clear, unambiguous words:

وَإِذَا أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ

وَأَذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ () ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلَا

فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ () (بقره ع ٧)

And (remember O Children of Israel) when We made a Covenant with you and caused the Mount to tower above you, (saying), Hold fast that which We have given you, and remember that which is therein, that you may ward off (evil). Then even after that you turned away, and if it had not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy, ye had been among the losers.
(al Baqar:: 63-64)

وَأَذْنَتْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُ ظُلَّةٌ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (اعراف ع ٢١)

And when We shook thee Mount above them as it were a covering and they supposed that it was about to fall upon them, (and We said) Hold fast that which We have given you and remember that which is therein that ye may ward off evil.
(al A'raaf: 171)

These Verses are quite clear that when the Israelis refused to accept the Torah, Allah made Mount Sinai aloft above their heads, and thus displaying His portent, made them accept the Torah. There is, therefore, no reason why what is so clear should be subjected to interpretations, as some contemporaries have done.

For any mountain to be uprooted and hang loose in the air is impossible and opposed to nature's law. That is why when this does happen, it is called a miracle, a special sign of Allah. But interpreters argue that the word *fauq* means 'high' only, not 'high on one's head', and just as the word '*nataq*' means 'uprooted, it also means, 'earthquake and a frightening motion'. Thus the meaning of the Verse in Surah-e-al A'raaf is: "When We made the mountain shake by an earthquake, as if it were a canopy in motion, and (out of the intensity of fright) they thought it was about to fall on them".⁴⁷

But these scholars forget that though the words *raf-a* and *nataq* have a number of meanings, according to Arabic style, that meaning will be determined which is suited to the context. Specially, as one part of the Qur'an interprets another part of it, only that meaning of a word will be looked upon as intended which may be determined by another verse.

Thus when the words *raf-a-a* and *fauq* in al Baqar Verse "رَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ" are considered along with *nataq* of al A'raaf Verse *nataqnal jabala*, the meaning, emerging clear and simple, will be that Mount Sinai was uprooted from its base to hang over the heads of the Israelis as if it were a canopy about to fall on them. Further, *fauq* combined with *raf-a-a* supports the opinion of the majority. The other commentators have strained the Qur'an too far.

From the two verses under consideration, it may be suspected that the Israelis were forced to accept and act on the Torah, whereas compulsion is forbidden in religion. After what we have stated here in the context of the Qur'an, such

⁴⁷ Tarjuman ul Qur'an Vol. 2 p.41

an objection does not arise. If due to the other commentators, the majority or contemporary, such a doubt does arise, the best answer has been given by Mufti Abduhu in his commentary: briefly, that this was not a matter of compulsion but the last manifestation of the portents of Allah, made for strengthening and support of the guidance of the Israelis. It took place after the Covenant, as is clear from the context of the wording.

MANY MIRACLES ---

It should not be forgotten, as already stated in these pages, that living among the Egyptians for centuries, following low occupations and virtually as slaves had degraded the superior talents of the Israelis. Idolatry and being impressed by what was apparent, and their intelligence had so blunted that they would wait for miracles to take place to persuade them to obey Divine commands. Without miracles, faith could not find a place in their hearts. Therefore, there could be only two ways of guidance for them. One was to plead with them by word of mouth and understanding, and showing a miracle only on some special occasion, as was the usual practice of the prophets.

The other was to display spiritual power quickly for improving their ruined condition, and, together with educating them in the ways of truth, support the spoken word with miracles so as to strengthen their faith. Considering their low mentality and degradation, Allah in His wisdom chose the latter course for them.

وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

Allah is Knowing, Wise.

This incident is also given in the Old Testament. Stated there is what our modern commentators say.

“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount; and the voice of the trumpet exceedingly loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Musa brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with Allah; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

“And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. So Musa went down unto the people, and spake unto them.”⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Exodus Ch. 19 verses 16 and on

PROMISE OF THE HOLY LAND AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ---

That part of Sinai in which the Israelis were camped at this time was close to Palestine. It was Allah's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that He would again make their children its owners and they would prosper here. Now Allah commanded through Musa that the Israelis should step into the Holy Land and turn its tyrants and persecuting rulers out of the country, and themselves settle there leading lives of justice and peace. And that it was His promise that victory would be theirs and their enemies would be defeated.

Before persuading the Israelis to enter the Holy Land, Musa sent twelve men to find out the conditions there. They went to the nearest township of Ariah, studied the place, and returning reported to Musa, that the people there were very sturdy and strong. Musa advised them not to mention this to the people, because slavery over the centuries had made them cowardly and taken away their sense of self-respect. But these men, being after all of the same blood, described to them, with considerable exaggeration, the power and prowess of the inhabitants of the Holy Land. Only Joshua bin Nun and Caleb b. Jephennah obeyed Musa's advice and did not speak a word that would discourage the Israelis.

Musa now told the Israelis to enter the habitation of Ariah, and take possession of the place, Allah being with them:

وَأَذَقَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَقَوْمِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ
 أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مُلُوكًا وَأَتَاكُمْ مَائِمًا يُؤْتِي أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَلَمِينَ () يَقَوْمِ
 اذْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتَدُّوا عَلَى
 أَدْبَارِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ()
 (مائدہ ع ۴)

And remember when Musa said unto his people, O my people! Remember Allah's favour unto you, how He placed among you prophets, and he made you kings and gave you that (which) He gave not to any other of (His) creatures.

O my people! go unto the Holy Land which Allah hath ordained for you. Turn not in flight, for surely you turn back as losers.
 (al Ma-i-da: 20-21)

The Israelis replied that they would not by any means go there because very cruel people lived there. They would not step in there until those people got out first.

Joshua and Caleb tried to encourage them, telling them that it was not at all difficult to enter the city gate, and they should go, as they would be victorious.

قَالَ رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا ادْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ
الْبَابَ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ فَإِنَّكُمْ غَالِبُونَ () وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فِتْوَاكُمْ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ()
(مائدہ ع ۴)

Then outspoke two of those who feared (their Lord) unto whom Allah had been gracious : Enter on upon them by the gate, for, if you enter by it, you will be victorious. So put your trust (in Allah), if you are indeed believers.

(al Ma-idah: 23)

These words, too, had no effect on the people, and they kept refusing to go.

قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى إِنَّا لَنُؤْمِنُ بِكَ وَبِآيَاتِكَ وَلَٰكِنَّا نَخَافُ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ اللَّهُ وَبَدَّلَ مَا كُنَّا نَافِعِينَ
فَقَاتِلْ إِنَّا هُنَا قَاعِدُونَ
(مائدہ ع ۴)

They said, O Musa! We will never enter (the land) while they are in it. So go thou and thy Lord and fight! We will sit here.

(al Ma-idah: 24)

Musa was very sad at hearing these words and prayed to Allah saying that he had no control over any one of these people, except his brother and himself, and he would like to be separated from them. But Allah inspired him that he should not despair, and their punishment would now be that they would wander about in this wilderness for forty years, and would not be able to enter the Holy Land!

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَأَخِي فَافْرِقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ
الْفَاسِقِينَ () قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً يَتِيهُونَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ()
(مائدہ ع ۴)

He said: My Lord! I have control over none but myself and my brother, so distinguish between us and the wrong doing folk.

(Their Lord) said: For this the land will surely be forbidden them for forty years that they will wander in this earth, bewildered. So grieve not over the wrong doing folk.

(al Ma-ida: 25-26)

The Sinai Valley is called Tia because Allah said that the children of Israel would wander about in it *yatihuna fil ard*.

When a person strays off from the path he is spoken of in Arabic as *taha fulanun*.

The Old Testament describes these details at length, though not in the same style. The refusal of the Israelis to enter the Holy Land, Musa's anger thereat, and entrance into the Holy Land now being forbidden them altogether in punishment are detailed in Chapter 14 of Numbers. Also mentioned is that Allah said that during these forty years all those who disobeyed Him and refused to enter the Holy Land will have died, but the new generation would be permitted to enter and under the leadership of Joshua and Caleb would overcome their enemies. By that time both Haroon and Musa would also have passed away.

“And the Lord spoke unto Musa and unto Haroon saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against Me? I have heard the murmurings of the Children of Israel which they murmur against Me. Say unto them, as truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in My ears, so will I do to you.”

“Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole numbers, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me. Doubtless you shall not come into the land concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in this wilderness forty years and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. And the number of the days in which you searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years. And ye shall know My breach of promise.”
(Numbers: 26-34)

The suspicion should not arise that Haroon and Musa too could not enter the Holy Land and had to stay in the wilderness, because when the Holy Land was made forbidden to the Israelis, it was necessary that a prophet of Allah should stay among them so that some of the old ones among them might continue on the right path, and the new generation might develop the capability that would enable them to enter the Holy Land and fulfill the commandment of Allah.

INCIDENT OF SLAUGHTERING A COW---

Once a murder took place among the Israelis and the criminal could not be traced. Suspicion turned to slander and a dangerous situation came about. The

matter was brought before Musa who turned to Allah for assistance. Allah told Musa to tell the people that they should sacrifice a cow, and rub a part of its flesh on the body of the deceased victim. If they did so, Allah would bring him to life and the case would thus be cleared up.

When Musa told the people to do this, they, in keeping with their habit of fallacious contention and making excuses, began arguing with him.

“Musa, are you joking with us? How can so serious a matter be connected with slaughtering a cow? And so be it, what should the cow be like? What its colour? And some other details as well, because we cannot be definite as to which precise cow Allah wants us to sacrifice.”

When Musa, under inspiration, answered all their questions, and there was no room left for further excuses, they decided to carry out Allah’s command. And by Allah’s command the murdered man came to life again, and he stated all that had taken place. This astonishing “sign” of Allah exposed the whole truth and the culprit had no alternative but to confess. Not only was the murderer found, the mutual suspicions and imminent bloodshed between the various tribes was averted.

By referring to this historical event, attention is drawn to two things: One, the violators of the covenant are told that the people among whose ancestors the incident took place, are witnesses of that incident to this day. Just as Allah showed His power then to bring the dead to life, He will again, in the Hereafter, give life to the dead. *Wa kazalika yuhiyu Allah-u al mauta*; “This is how Allah brings the dead to life.”

Secondly, the Israelis are told that if another people had been shown so many miracles as had been shown their ancestors, they would eternally have become obedient to Allah, never for a moment allowing the danger of disobedience to creep into their hearts. “But on you and your ancestors, such an effect never took place, and if it ever did, it never lasted long. And today if you are refusing to accept the Prophet ﷺ and are bent upon opposing him, it is your ignorance and the influence of your age-old prejudice and bigotry.

The Qur’an tells us only so much about this incident and gives no further detail.

وَأذَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقْرَةً ۗ قَالُوا
 اتَّخَذْنَا هُزُوءًا ۗ قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ () قَالُوا اذْعُ لَنَا
 رَبِّكَ يُبَيِّنُ لَنَا مَا هِيَ ۗ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَّا فَارِضٌ وَلَا بُكْرٌ
 عَوَاقِبُ ۗ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ ۗ فَافْعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ () قَالُوا اذْعُ لَنَا رَبِّكَ يُبَيِّنُ لَنَا

مَالُونَهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاءٌ فَاقِعٌ لَوْنُهَا
تَسْرُّ النَّظِيرِينَ () قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ () إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشْبَهُ
عَلَيْنَا () وَأَنَا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ () قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَّا
ذُلُولٌ تُبَيِّرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَّا شِيَةَ فِيهَا قَالُوا
الَّتِي جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبْحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ () وَإِذْ قَبَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا
فَادَّرَءْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ () فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ
بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُخَيِّئُ اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ()
(بقره ع ٩)

And when Musa said unto his people: Lo Allah commandeth you that you sacrifice a cow. they said, Dost thou make game of us? He answered: Allah forbid that I should be among the foolish!

They said pray for us unto thy Lord that He make clear unto us what (cow) she is. (Musa) answered: Lo! He saith, Verily she is a cow neither with calf nor immature; (she is) between the two conditions, so do that which you are commanded.

They said: Pray for us unto thy Lord that He make clear to us of what colour she is. (Musa) answered: Lo! He saith, Verily she is a yellow cow, bright is her colour gladdening beholders.

They said: Pray for us unto thy Lord that he make clear to us what (cow) she is. Lo! Cows are much alike to us, and lo! if Allah wills, we may be led aright!

(Musa) answered: Lo! He saith, Verily she is a cow unyoked; she plougheth not the soil nor watereth the tilth, whole and without mark. They said, Now thou bringest the truth. So they sacrificed her, though almost they did not.

And remember when ye slew a man and disagreed concerning it, and Allah brought forth that which ye were hiding. And We said, smite him with some of it. Thus Allah bringeth the dead to life and showeth you His portents so that you may understand. (al Baqar: 67-73)

According to a Sahih Tradition, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that if the Israelis had sacrificed any cow when they were advised by Musa, there would have been no condition of what precise cow she should be and the command would have been fulfilled. But by putting improper questions they imposed limitations on themselves. That is why the Qur'an condemns arguments and foolish talk with the prophets, for, it leads to unbelief and renunciation of faith. The Muslim ummah is advised to keep away from such practice.

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سُئِلَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ () (بقره ع ١٣)

Or would you question your messenger as Musa was questioned aforetime? He who chooseth disbelief in place of faith, verily he hath gone astray from a plain road.

(al Baqar : 108)

Here the question may fairly be asked, what connection is there between slaughtering a cow and bringing the slain man back to life, that this method was adopted?

It is not within human power to fathom Allah's ways, but within the range of intelligence bestowed on man, it may easily be understood from Israeli history, as shown in these pages, that Egyptian environment had induced idolatry in them, specially, reverence for the cow and cow-worship and this kept coming up again and again to influence them. It may be recalled that when, after the incident of cow worship, Musa had asked them to abide by the Torah, they made all manner of excuses and might have denied him altogether, if the rising up of Mount Sinai had not taken place. On that occasion, Allah stated that the basic cause of their prevarication was that idolatry and sanctity of cow-reverence had not yet been distanced from them. Rather, it appeared that it was rooted in their hearts.

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ ۗ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ
وَأَسْمِعُوا ۗ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا ۗ وَأَشْرَبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ
بِكُفْرِهِمْ ۗ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ إِيمَانُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ()

(بقره ع ١١)

And when We made with you a Covenant and caused the Mount to tower above you (saying): Hold fast that which We

have given you, and hear (Our word), they said: We hear and we rebel. And (worship of) the calf was made to sink into their hearts because of the rejection (of the Covenant). Say evil is that which your belief enjoineeth on you, if ye are believers. (al Baqar: 93)

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَنتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ (١)

And Musa came unto you with clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), yet, while he was away, ye chose the calf (for worship) and ye were wrong-doers. (al Baqar: 92)

On this occasion it was Allah's expedience that this error of the Israelis should be corrected in a way which their own eyes should clearly see. Thus they were made to witness that the thing of which the sanctity was sunk in their hearts, is committed to death with their own hands, and it could do them not the least harm.

And also it should not be thought that it was the sanctity of the cow's flesh rubbing a part of which brought the dead man to life again, because had life and death been under the influence of cow-sanctity, why did the same part of its flesh not become a live cow again? But the cow that was slaughtered lies lifeless, its parts serving as table delicacies!

The truth is that life and death are in Allah's hands only. The object, worship of which is so loved, is a thing inferior to the human being created to serve human beings, not to be made a goddess. Allah alone has the power to give death to whomsoever He wills and life to whomsoever He wills. Two facts were witnessed in one incident: the cow's life was changed to death; and the body of a dead man was given fresh life!

فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ

Probably, because of this the Qur'an has split the incidence of cow-slaughter in two parts. In the first part, the Israelis' cow-worship is mentioned: that when, for a particular objective, they were asked to slaughter a cow, the same love of cow-worship became a stumbling block for them and, following the Egyptians' faith in cow sanctity, they offered excuse upon excuse so that they might not have to slaughter a cow. But, at last, caught in the intricacies of their own questioning, finally, had to carry out the command.

When the Qur'an voiced this incident, it was natural for the listeners to find out why and how the cow-slaughter took place for which the Israelis had made so many excuses.

In the second part, a reply to this natural question is given by stating the apparent side of that incident which was related to their protests and hesitation. For this reason, the second part begins with the word (اذ) *iz*.

This exposition of the Qur'an is made by remaining within the limits of its phrases, so there is no need to go into lengthy arguments or looking upon the incident with astonishment, seek cover under commentaries and arguments.

There is no doubt that the incident was among the many constant portents of Allah, made manifest to confirm the truth in the manner as directed by His wisdom, and which, besides being a portent, embodied in itself many other good reasons, confirmed in the context of the Qur'an.

Alongside this event are the words:

وَكَذَلِكَ يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى

"And thus Allah brings the dead to life or And thus will Allah bring the dead to life".

And in the same context, are the words:

وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ

"So that He may show you His portents... the portents of His power."

In other words, before narrating the cow slaughter episode to speak repeatedly of Allah's portents, and refer to life after death alongside of it, and speak of this as also a portent of Allah, is sufficient proof that without going into any long commentary, the clear and simple meaning of these Verses is what has been stated in these lines above.

The commentaries offered by our modern contemporaries of the relevant Verses, wherein the events are presented as two, and sometimes admitted as one, are not acceptable and are opposed to what the Qur'an says.

For instance, it is said that such slaughtering of a cow was an age-old custom among Israelis themselves, and this is recorded in the Old Testament. When a murder took place and the culprit could not be traced, to avoid mutual wrangling and fighting, a cow that had not been used for ploughing or watering the field, would be taken to a valley which had not been cultivated before but had a stream of water. There the relatives or people of the locality to which the criminal was suspected to belong, were gathered. Then a soothsayer would step forward and making the cow stand over the water, slaughter its neck. Then as its blood mingled in the water, the suspected group

would wash their hands in it, proclaiming aloud at the same time, "We have neither murdered any one with our hands, nor do we know who the murderer was." These people would then be freed of all suspicion, and fighting. But, if even one leader or chief of the suspected people did not partake of the ceremony or wash his hands there, the blood-money would have to be paid by his group.⁴⁸

The defects in this exegesis should be apparent to normal intelligence. The most objectionable part of it is that if such a custom prevailed among the Israelis of old, why were they surprised and why did they tell Musa when he, in obedience to Allah's decision, advised them to slaughter a cow, that he was joking with them.

If these words were by way of a taunt, it would have been quite natural for Musa to answer. Why be surprised about it since you know that this is an old custom of yours?"

In this connection, some very strange stories about the manner of securing the desired cow are told in the commentary books. These stories are copied from Hebrew literature. They were circulated, became popular and were inserted in the commentaries. But research scholars have analysed them carefully and separated them from Qur'anic exegesis. So great and eminent a commentator as Hafiz Imaduddin Ibn Kathir gives his finding:

"There are contradictions between one and another of such statements as are traced to Obeydah, Abul Aaliyah or Suddi. The fact is that they have been collected from Hebrew books, and, though it is permissible to quote from them, we can neither deny nor confirm them, nor can any absolute reliance be placed on them, unless supported by the Qur'an or Tradition. Allah knows best."

In connection with the incident under consideration, he says: "What particular part of the cow was it that was rubbed on the dead man? The miracle is there whichever part it might have been. If it were at all necessary for us to know, whether from the mundane or spiritual point of view, which particular part it was, Allah would have stated it. But he kept it in doubt, though in reality, it is, in any case, defined. Nor in this connection, is any reliable Tradition proved from the Prophets. Therefore we too should leave the matter obscure."⁴⁹

A Tradition in Muslim tells us that if the Israelis had not argued with Musa, no conditions would have been imposed on them regarding selection of the

⁴⁸ Deuteronomy Ch 21/ 1 - -9

⁴⁹ al Bidaya wal Nihaya Vol.1 p 112

cow. So if there were other details pertinent to the occasion, the Prophet ﷺ would definitely have spoken of them.

Suffice it that this was a great portent among the portents of Allah, and only such details are worthy of acceptance as are stated in the Qur'an, the rest are but stories.

Our argument on the subject of miracles connected with Musa are only with those commentators who while they admit the miracles of the prophets, yet wherever they see any loophole for commentary, indulge in them, on account of which the facts are stretched beyond the limits of miracles. As for the mullajida p. 526, who do not concede the fact of miracles and support their disbelief with false expositions, it is necessary to talk with them first on the subject of the essence of miracles, *nafs e mojiza*.

However, Allah tells us that in spite of His many portents and His countless benedictions on the Israelis, they remained impervious and continued in their wrong ways. Their hearts were hard as rocks, rather their arrogance and refraction had made them worse, for, with all their hardness, rocks have many uses for humanity, but the Israelis have nothing but injury and loss in the finale of their lives.

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبَكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً
وَأَنَّ مِنْ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَأَنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشْقُقُ
فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَأَنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ
بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ (١)

(بقره ع ٩)

Then even after that your hearts were hardened and became as rocks or worse than rocks for hardness. For indeed there are rocks from which rivers gush, and indeed there are rocks which split asunder so that water floweth from them. And indeed there are rocks which fall down for the fear of Allah. Allah is not unaware of what you do. (al Baqar: 74)

Such is the hardness of hearts of the Children of Israel and such their denial of the truth, that even if, in idiomatic language, it is said that their hearts had become stones, a true picture of their imperviousness cannot be visualised. Because, though rocks are hard, they are not useless. From rocky mountains streams and rivulets flow, springs of cool and sweet water, and if earthquakes come, huge pieces of them fly into the air like cotton-pods, falling head down and glorifying the Lord, confessing, as if with their tongues, their fear and awe of Him. But these Children of Israel, neither have Allah's portents any effect

on them, nor do the sweet, gentle words and counsels of the prophets penetrate their hearts, nor does the fear of Allah come to them when they disobey Him!

MUSA AND KORAH

There was a very wealthy man among the Israelis. His name, as given by the Qur'an was Qaroon, Korah in the Old Testament. His treasury was full of jewels, the keys of which could be lifted only by several labourers. His wealth and capital had made him extremely arrogant, and he looked down on his relatives and others of his community with utter contempt.

Commentators say that he was a first cousin of Musa, tracing his genealogy as follows:

Qaroon. b. Yas-hur b. Qahat, while that of Musa is: Musa. b. Imran b. Qahat.

This is as recorded also by Abdullah ibn Abbas .

Historians state that Korah was a servant of Pharaoh's court and had accumulated his vast wealth during his service there. Samiri, they say was a hypocrite without any faith in the religion of Musa.⁵⁰

Musa and his people once advised him that Allah having bestowed on him uncountable wealth and honour, he should be grateful to Him and help the poor, and the needy and beggars and such, and give zaka't; that to forget Allah and disobey Him was against morality as well as nobleness; and that Allah's blessings should not be repaid by scorn for the poor and hatred of his own relatives.

Korah did not like such advice and he told Musa that the wealth he possessed was not a gift of Allah, but the earning of his own intelligence and experience, and he could not waste it in such ways as Musa had proposed.

إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْتُهُ، عَلَى عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي

But Musa continued his missionary duties trying to show Korah the right way.

Korah seeing Musa's persistence, drove out one day with great pomp and splendour to overawe him. Musa, at the time, was preaching to the people when he passed by. The idea was that if Musa had a following, so did he, besides being lord of great wealth. Such show would surely humble Musa!

On seeing Korah's splendour, some Israelis, out of the weakness of human nature, exclaimed, "Oh, how we wish we too had such wealth and splendour!"

⁵⁰ al Bidaya wal Nihaya Vol. 1 p.309

But some other Israelis, men of vision, warned these self-deceived ones not to be misled by such worldly show; they should not covet such things, and they would shortly see the end of such opulence!

Now when Korah had repeatedly exhibited his arrogance and pomp, and had done his best to humble Musa and the Muslims, Divine sense of honour was moved, and, in the words of the Qur'an:

فَحَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبِدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ

"Deep down into the earth we sank him and his treasure."

Israelis saw with their own eyes how pride was destroyed and the paraphernalia of pride!

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ (١) إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ
وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ (٢)

(مومن ع ٣)

And verily We sent Musa with Our revelations and a clear warrant, unto Pharaoh and Haman and Korah, but they said, A lying sorcerer!
(Momin: 23-24)

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوا
سَابِقِينَ (١) فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذُنُوبِهِ ۗ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِيَاءَ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ ۗ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ ۗ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَّنْ أَغْرَقْنَاهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ (٢)

(عنكبوت ع ٤)

And Korah, Pharaoh and Haman! Musa came unto them with clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), but they were boastful in the land; and they were but sinners. So We took each in his sin: of them was he on whom We sent a hurricane, and of them was he whom We caused the earth to swallow, and of them was he whom We drowned. It was not for Allah to wrong them, but they wronged themselves.

(Ankabut: 39-40)

The events connected with Korah and Musa are correct only so far. The rest have been borrowed from Hebrew literature and are not reliable. As Ibn Kathir says;

وقد ذكرهنا اسرئيليات اضربنا عنها صفحاً

(ابن كثير سورة القصص)

"And here much is from Hebrew literature which we ignore.

Some interpreters argue that the words

أُوتِيْتَهُ، عَلَى عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي

imply Korah's knowledge of chemistry. But research scholars deny this. They said that 'knowledge' here implies his own intelligence and that knowledge of chemistry is too far fetched.

Commentators are not definite about the time when Korah's incident took place in Egypt before the drowning of Pharaoh or in Tiah after the drowning? If before the drowning, the word *daar* is used here in its literal meaning; if thereafter, it must have taken place in the field of Tiah, and the word *daar* would then imply 'tents'. We think it was in Tiah, because the Qur'an mentions it after Pharaoh's drowning.

إِنَّ قَارُونَ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى فَبَغَى عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَأَتَيْنَهُ مِنَ الْكُنُوزِ مَا
 إِنَّ مَفْتِحَهُ لَتَنُوَّهُ أَبِالْعُصْبَةِ أُولَى الْقُوَّةِ ۚ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ قَوْمُهُ، لَا تَفْرَحْ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ () وَأَبْغَى فِيمَا آتَكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَآتَنَسَ
 نَصِيْبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفَسَادَ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ () قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْتَهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ
 عِنْدِي ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَم أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَهْلَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مَنْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ
 مِنْهُ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرَ جَمْعًا ۗ وَلَا يُسْئَلُ عَنْ ذُنُوبِهِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ () فَخَرَجَ
 عَلَى قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ ۗ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَلِيتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ
 مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونَ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ () وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ
 وَيَلَكُمْ تَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ۖ وَلَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا
 الصَّابِرُونَ () فَخَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبَدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ ۗ فَمَا كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ فِئَةٍ
 يَنْصُرُوهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُتَصِّرِينَ () وَأَصْبَحَ الَّذِينَ

تَمَنُّوا مَكَانَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَقُولُونَ وَيَكَانَ اللَّهُ يَسْطُرُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
 مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَوْلَا أَنْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَاءُ وَيَكَانَهُ لَأَ
 يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ () تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا
 فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ()

(قصص ع ٩)

Now Korah was of Musa's folk but he oppressed them, and We gave him so much treasure that the stores thereof would verily have been a burden for a troop of mighty men. When his own folk said unto him, Exult not: lo! Allah loveth not the exultant. But seek the abode of the Hereafter in that which Allah hath given thee, and neglect not the portion of the world, and be thou kind, as Allah hath been kind to thee, and seek no corruption in the earth. Lo! Allah loveth not corrupters.

He said, I have been given it only on account of the knowledge I possess, Knew he not that Allah had destroyed already of the generations before him men who were mightier than him in strength and in respect of following? The guilty are not questioned of their sins.

Then went he forth before his people in his pomp. Those who were desirous of the life of the world said: Ah, would that unto us had been given the like of what hath been given unto Korah! Lo! he is lord of rare good fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said: Woe unto you! The reward of Allah for him who believeth and doeth right is better, and only the steadfast will obtain it.

So We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place. Then he had no host to help him against Allah, nor was he of those who can save themselves.

And morning found those who had coveted his place but yesterday, crying, Ah, welladay! Allah enlargeth the provision for whom He will of His slaves and straiteneth it (for whom He will). If Allah had not been gracious unto us, He would have caused it to swallow us (also). Ah, welladay! the disbelievers never prosper. And for the Abode of the Hereafter, We assign it unto those who seek not oppression

in the earth, nor yet corruption. The sequel is for those who ward off evil.
(al Qasas: 76- 83)

The Old Testament too has mentioned these details. But reading both these accounts a fair-minded person will conclude that when the Qur'an states a historical event, it mentions only those parts which are necessary for its objective and mission, and ignores the rest. But the Old Testament goes into quite unnecessary details, sometimes irrelevant and even mutual contradictions.

Musa and his Sufferings at the hands of the Israelis –

It is clear from the foregoing pages that the Israelis caused Musa a great deal of suffering both by their words and action, even going to the length of slander and false aspersions.

Pleading for idol worship, specially, obsession with that of the cow, rejection of the Torah, refusal to go into the holy land, disgust with manna and salva. In short, there is a long series of obstinate behaviour and ignorant arguments with Musa. And Musa tolerates all this with great patience like a true, unwavering prophet, ever trying to guide them aright!

If it is desired to study the peculiar characteristics of these people, the following chapters of the Old Testament, besides the Qur'an, will be found well worth reading:

Exodus 12/11-12; ; 16/ 2-3;; Numbers: 14/ 1-3; 16/ 3-14;

7/ 12-13; Deuteronomy 9/ 2324.

Besides the events recorded in the Qur'an and reproduced in these pages, there are references in Surahs Ahzaab and Saf condemning the sufferings caused by the Israelis to Musa.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ آذَوْا مُوسَىٰ فَبَرَّأَهُ اللَّهُ مِمَّا قَالُوا
وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَجِيهًا () (احزاب ع ٩)

O ye who believe! Be not as those who slandered Musa, but Allah proved his innocence of that which they alleged, and he was well esteemed in Allah's sight. (al Ahzaab: 69)

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تَأْتُونَنِي وَقَدْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
إِلَيْكُمْ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ
() (صف ع ١)

And remember when Musa said unto his people, O my people! Why persecute ye me, when ye well know that I am Allah's messenger unto you? So when they went astray, Allah sent their hearts astray. And Allah guideth not the evil living folk.
(al Saff: 5)

Commentators have argued on these two points. Were the sufferings caused to Musa the ones that have been stated in these pages in connection with the rebellious nature of the Israelis? Or, is the reference to some special incident? Some of them believe in the former, and some assert that the two Verses quoted refer to other incidents. They say that there are several authentic Traditions which are not categorically mentioned in the Qur'an. Therefore, any one of the incidents or all of them, are the basis of the revelation of the two Verses.

One of these incidents is reported by Abu Hurayra in Bukhari and Muslim to the effect that Musa was extremely modest and never even looked at any part of his nude body.

But the Israelis were in the habit of bathing in the nude in front of everybody, and would make fun of Musa, sometimes taunting him that he had leucodermic marks on his private parts; or that he suffered from hydrocele, and such; the reason why he bathed in privacy to hide his defects. Musa would hear such words in silence. But Allah decided to clear him of all such suspicions, and so, one day, when Musa was preparing for a bath, and had taken his clothes off and placed them on a slab of rock, the slab moved by Allah's command to a place where some Israelis were bathing naked. Musa, forgetting himself and in a fit of anger, ran after the piece of rock, calling out, "O stone! my clothes! O stone! my clothes!" The stone came to rest in the midst of the crowd, and everyone saw clearly that Musa's body was clear of all suspicions. Musa was so angry at this unexpected incident that he struck his staff on the slab of rock so hard that its marks were imprinted on it.

Bukhari and Muslim have recorded this incident in a number of ways. One of these is mentioned as having occasioned the revelation of that Verse in Surah e Ahzaab where the sufferings of Musa at the hands of the Israelis and his acquaintance are mentioned.

Ibn Abi Hatim conveys another Tradition, one from Ali regarding the same Verse: that Musa and Haroon went to Mount Hor together but Haroon died there, and Musa returned alone, which caused the people to accuse him of having murdered Haroon. Musa was naturally very pained at such accusation, so Allah commanded the angels to present Haroon's corpse before the people. The angels presented the body before the people and they found no marks of assassination on it.

Yet another anecdote in the commentary books is that when Korah found Musa's counsels unpleasant, he gave money to a professional woman to declare, when Musa was preaching to the people, that this man maintained illicit relations with her.

The next day, the woman did accordingly. Hearing her words, Musa fell in prostration, then, raising his head, said to the woman whether she could repeat her accusation on oath before Allah that it was true. But a trembling seized the woman and she confessed that Korah had given her money to forge the lie. otherwise, Musa was innocent and pure! Musa, then, invoked a curse on Korah and Korah and his treasure were sunk deep into the earth.

EVALUATION --

The wisest attitude to adopt in connection with this argument is to leave vague what the Qur'an leaves vague. The Qur'an does not specify each particular incident causing suffering to Musa and, therefore, we too should not try to go into details, but have faith that such did happen, without relating the matter to any particular incident. But if it should at all be necessary to give attention to detail and specification, it ought to be admitted that the occasion for the revelation of the two Verses are all those incidents which are mentioned in the Qur'an and the Traditions relative to the sufferings caused to Musa. It should also be kept in mind that the whole subject of suffering is one that affects his dignity and commanding status which Allah protected and purged of gossip and foolish talk.

The three Traditions recorded above from the books may be preferred as specifying the occasions for the revelation of the two Verses. As for principle, it is necessary for some particular event to occasion a revelation, according to Shah Waliullah, is wrong. Rather all those events which took place during the lifetime of the Prophet, and which can occasion the revelation of a Verse may be said to be equally and together the cause of its revelation, *shaan e nuzool*.

Najjar has gone into a lengthy discussion on this subject recording also his discussion with Egyptian ulema, but as we do not fully agree with either of them, and agree with Ibn Kathir and Ibn Hayyan, we shall ignore that discussion here altogether.

HAROON'S DEATH --

We have stated in the foregoing pages that when the Israelis refused to enter the Holy Land, Allah told them through Musa that they would have to wander about in the wilderness for forty years, not one of those who refused being able to see that country.

At the same time, Allah told them that Musa and Haroon would stay with them for their guidance. When, wandering about hither and thither, the Israelis arrived by the mountain peak of Hor, Haroon and Musa on Allah's command, went up the hill for devotions in seclusion, and after some days, Haroon passed away, Musa buried him and came down to the people and informed them of Haroon's death.

In the words of The Old Testament :

“And the Children of Israel, even the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came unto Mount Hor. And the Lord spoke unto Musa and Haroon, in Mount Hor by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, Haroon shall be gathered unto his people, for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the Children of Israel, because ye rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. Take Haroon and Eleazar, his son, and bring them up unto Mount Hor, And strip Haroon of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Haroon shall be gathered unto people, and shall die there. And Musa did as the Lord commanded; and they went up into Hor in the sight of all the congregation and Musa stripped Haroon of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Haroon died there in the top of the mountain; and Musa and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Haroon was dead, they mourned for Haroon thirty days, even all the house of Israel”.⁵²

MUSA AND KHIZR -

One of the important events of Musa's life is his meeting with a certain knowledgeable personality from whom he obtained some secrets of the *created* world (*aalam e takveeniyaat*). This meeting is described at length in Surah e Kahf, while Bokhari gives some added details. He records that Saeed b. Jabcer told Abdullah b. Abbas that Nauf Bakkali says that the person named Musa who met Khizr was not the Israeli Musa, but some other. Abdullah b. Abbas replied that Bakkali was a liar, and that Abi b. Ka'b had told him that he had heard the Prophet ﷺ say that one day Musa was addressing the people when someone asked him who was the man possessing the most knowledge in those times. Musa replied, Allah has granted me the greatest knowledge.” The answer displeased Allah, for it was more becoming of Musa to have said, “Allah knows better!” Then Musa was filled with inspiration and told that in a place where the two oceans met, there was a servant of Allah, who knew more of certain secrets than Musa did!

⁵² Numbers: 22-29

Musa asked Allah how he could reach this man, and Allah told him to put a fish in his basket and the spot where the fish would disappear, was the place that man of knowledge would be found!

Musa placed a fish in his basket and taking Joshua with him set off in search of the place. After walking quite far the two rested and placing their heads on stones fell asleep. Joshua, who happened to wake before Musa, saw the fish come to life and slipping out of the basket, made its way into the sea, where it seemed to make a path as it went along.

By the time Musa woke, Joshua forgot all about it, and both resumed their journey through that day and night. Next morning, Musa said that he felt quite fatigued and asked Joshua to bring the fish with which they might satisfy their hunger.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said that Musa felt no fatigue as far as the destination he was told, but when by mistake he went beyond it, he felt tired, Joshua now remembered and told Musa that Satan made him forget to tell him that when they had fallen asleep on the slab of rock, the fish surprisingly came to life and slipped away into the sea.

The Prophet ﷺ said that that part of the sea was a path for the fish, but astonishment for Musa and Joshua.

Musa said that the destination they were looking for was that very slab of rock, and both made their way back to it. When they arrived there, they found a well-attired man sitting there. Musa saluted him with the word of *salam* but the man replied that there was no *salam* there, meaning that no Muslim lived there. This was Khizr.

Musa introduced himself, and Khizr asked, "Musa of the clan of Israel?" Musa confirmed and told him that he had come to obtain from him that knowledge which Allah had given only to him ﷻ

"You will not be able to tolerate it with patience," Khizr replied. "Allah has bestowed on me that knowledge of the secret of creation (*takveeni ramoz o asrar*) which He has not given you, and He has bestowed on you *tashree-ee* knowledge which I have not been given."

Musa said, "Allah willing, you will find me patient and steadfast and I will not do anything against your liking."

"My condition", Khizr said, "is that you will ask me no question in any matter that your eyes may see, because, later, I myself will tell you all about it."

Musa agreed, and both set off on their way. When they arrived at the sea-coast, they saw a boat, and Khizr asked the boatman the hire for taking the

two. The boatmen recognised Khizr and refused to take any hire money from him, and insisted that he and his companion step aboard, which they did.

Not much later, Khizr pulled out a plank of wood in the stem and made a hole in the boat. Musa could not control himself, and told Kizar, that boat-owners had obliged the two of them and were carrying the two of them free, and Khizr was repaying the obligation by doing something that was sure to drown everyone in the boat!

Khizr said, "Did I not tell you that you would not be able to show patience?"

Musa apologised for having forgotten and requested him not to be stern with him.

Meanwhile a bird came and perched on the edge of the boat dipped its beak in the water for a drop. Khizr said, "In comparison with Allah's knowledge, your knowledge or mine is as a drop in the ocean."

The Holy Prophet ﷺ commented that this first question of Musa was due, in fact, to his having forgotten.

The boat anchored and both alighted. They walked along the coast when they saw some children playing. Khizr went up to them and killed a boy. Musa could not again contain himself, and exclaimed, "You have killed a boy quite wrongly. This is a terrible thing to do!"

Khizr again said, "I told you in the very beginning that you would not be able to bear with me in patience!"

The Prophet ﷺ commented that because this incident was harder than the first to bear, Musa was quite helpless but to become impatient.

Musa apologised again and requested that his impatience be overlooked once more, adding that if this happened again, he would offer no further excuses, and Khizr could, then, part from him.

Both continued on their way until they came to a habitation where the people were well-to-do, in every way able to afford hospitality, but, in spite of their request to be treated as guests, being travelers, they were refused.

Both were going along and still in the habitation when they came across a house of which a wall seemed to be so bent that it might collapse. Khizr gave it a hand and put it right,

Musa said, "We came to this habitation as travelers, but its people neither entertained us nor gave us a place to rest. But you have repaired the wall of a house without taking any wage for it. If you had to do it, you might well have settled a wage for your labour to buy some food which we need."

Khizr replied that it was now time for them to part company, and that all that had taken place over which Musa could not be patient, was from Allah's side!

Referring to this last incident, the Prophet ﷺ said / remarked: "I feel that Musa should have shown a little more patience so that we might have learnt some more about the hidden secrets."

The Qur'an describes the events in these words:

قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ ۗ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا () أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسْكِينٍ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا () وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ أَبُوهُ مُؤْمِنِينَ فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا () فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ زَكَاةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا () وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا ۗ رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۗ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ ۗ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي ۗ ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا () (كهف ع ١٠)

He said, This is the parting between thee and me. I will announce unto thee the interpretation of that thou couldst not bear with patience.

As for the ship, it belonged to poor people working on the river, and I wished to mar it, for there was a king behind them who is taking every ship by force.

And as for the lad, his parents were believers and we feared lest he should oppress them by rebellion and disbelief. And We intended that their Lord should change him for them for one better in purity and nearer to mercy.

And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father had been righteous, and thy Lord intended that they should come to their full strength and should bring forth their treasure as a mercy from their Lord; and I did it not upon my own command. Such is the interpretation of that wherewith thou couldst not bear. (al Kahf: 78-82)

The Qur'an tells us at the beginning of this story: *wa allam-na-hu min ladunni ilman*, "We taught him knowledge from Us." And at the close of his meeting with Musa, Khizr explains that what he had done was not of his own volition.

wa ma fa-al-tu-hu un amri. Both these phrases show that Allah had given Khizr that basic knowledge of certain things which is related to the hidden secrets of creation and inner facts.

This was an elucidation that Allah made clear to his chosen ones, worthy of the truth that if the veil were lifted from every secret of the world of being and non-being, as it had been done for Khizr in respect of some matters, the entire order of the world would change, and everything about deeds and trials would turn upside down. This world is a place of trial of deeds, and, therefore, it is necessary to keep its creation-secrets hidden. The balance Allah has appointed for recognition of truth and falsehood should continue functioning.

It should now be clear that since Musa was a prophet of very high status, and the mission of law and its commands was his duty, he could not tolerate Khizr's exhibition of creation-secrets, and, in spite of his promise to be patient, he could not control himself over violations of law, and kept drawing Khizr's attention to the principle of permissibility of right and forbiddance of wrong. And then the two parted.

There are some things in the Tradition quoted above from Bokharri in addition to the events given in Surah e Kahf. These are, in fact, only introductory or explanatory. It is also mentioned there that Khizr was an *abd e saleh* (a righteous man).

At this point, some discussion may be necessary,

Is Khizr a name or title? Is Khizr only *abd e saleh (wali)*, or also a prophet?

Is he still alive or is dead?

Commentators have a number of answers for each of these questions. Some argue that Khizr was his title, some that this was his name, and some advance alternative names, such as, Balya b. Ma'lkaan, Eilia b. Malkan, Khazroon, Ma'mar, Iyas, Alyasa, and so on.

In answer to the second question, some hold that he was a righteous man and no more, while some take him for a prophet. The majority believe that he was a *nabi*, and not a *rasool*

About the third question, some think that he is endowed with immortal life and is still alive. Some narratives are advanced in support.

Highly eminent scholars argue that Khizr's immortality is proved neither by the Qur'an nor any Tradition, and, therefore, he also passed away in the normal course of life.

To derive the right conclusion in respect of either of these three questions, it should be noted that the Qur'an does not mention either the name, title or alias of the venerable personage we call Khizr. All it does to narrate his story is refer to him as *abdan min ibadaina*. But Bukhari and Muslim in their *sahih* Traditions use the name Khizr for him. If we could identify his name or title on the basis of historical record, we could easily say that such and such was his name and such his title, But so variegated are the historical statements that we cannot derive any definite conclusion from them. His personality appears before us as one called Khizr and that he was a contemporary of Musa. All arguments besides this are no more than conjectures.

As regards the second question, the preferable opinion is that he was a *nabi*, because the style in which the Qur'an speaks of his status, can be only that appropriate for *nabuwat*. The status of *wilayat* is far below it. For instance, when he states his reason for killing the boy he also mentions that he did it not of his own volition but by command of the Lord.

It is not proper for a *wali*, a saintly person, to kill anyone on the basis of *ilham*, because *ilham* is subject to the possibility of error, for which reason, there are many contradictions in the *makashifat* of the *aulia-Allah* (saintly people, friends of Allah). For this reason they are not accepted for *shara-ee*, legal argument.

Therefore, in mundane affairs, a deed that is apparently a very great crime could be justified only by Divine inspiration, *wahi*.

Besides this Verse, the style in which the dialogue between Musa and Khizr is resented also supports the contention that Khizr was a *nabi*. And that is why so great a prophet as Musa appears to seek his company and obtain mundane knowledge from him, and Khizr dares to argue with him on the basis of his knowledge.

However, considering the collective achievements of *nabuwat* and *risalat*, prophethood and status as messenger. Musa's status is far above that of Khizr, because he is *nabi* as well as *rasool*; he is law giver and holder of a Divine Book, and among messengers an eminent messenger. Thus Khizr's knowledge, related to secret mundane knowledge, cannot transcend Musa's *tashri-i* knowledge, knowledge of Divine Law.

As regards the third question, the correct opinion is that of the research ulema that Khizr was not endowed with immortal life and has long since passed away. The Qur'an tells us that Allah has not given immortal life to any human being and death is certain for every one.

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ ۗ (انبياء ع ٣)

“We appointed immortality for no mortal before thee.”

(al Anmbiya : 34)

The Qur'an also tells us that Allah has taken a covenant from every *nabi* that when the advent of Muhammed ﷺ takes place, it will be the duty of each one of them who may be present at that time, to believe in him and help him. Every prophet submitted and agreed, reinforcing and confirming the covenant between them and Allah.

وَإِذَا أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُمْ مِّن كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ ۗ قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي ۗ قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا ۗ قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا ۗ وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ۙ (آل عمران ع ٩)

When Allah made His covenant with the Prophets. (He said): Behold that which I have given you of the Scripture and knowledge. And afterward there will come unto you a messenger, confirming that which you possess. Ye shall believe in him and ye shall help him. He said, Do ye agree, and will ye take up My burden (which I lay upon you) in this matter? They answered we agree. He said, Then bear ye witness, I will be a witness with you. (Aal e Imran : R9)

Had Khizr been alive, it would have been his duty to present himself and announce his faith and help him in every battle. But nowhere do we find any proof of such a thing, although we have record of Gabriel and other angels helping in Huneyn, Badr and other battles.

Besides the Qur'an, Bukhari and Muslim also refute the claim that Khizr is still alive.

Abdullah b. Omer tells us that one night after isha prayers, the Prophet ﷺ said: “Have you observed this night? Be it understood that whoever has yet to live, not one of them will be left alive in a hundred years.”⁵³

This Tradition, worded differently is to be found in other Tradition books also, and nowhere is any confirmation found that Khizr is alive nor that an exception is made for him.

⁵³ Bukhari, Muslim Kitab ul Fazail

The famous Traditionist Ibn Qayyam asserts that no Tradition exists from the Prophet ﷺ or any of his Companions to prove that Khizr is still alive. To the contrary the Qur'an and sahih Traditions confirm his death.

Authorities like Shaykh ul Islam Ibn Teemya, Ibn Qayyam, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Jauzi, Imam Bukhari, Qazi Abu Ya'la Hanbli, Abu Tahir b. al Ghabari, Ali b. Musa al Raḍa, Abul Fadl Marisi, Abu Tahir b. al Ibadi, Abul Fadl b. Nasir, Qazi Abu Bakr b. al Arabi, Abu Bakr Muhammed b. al Hasan, are convinced about Khizr's death.

The consensus reproduced by some ulema pertaining to Khizr is void of any authority. The well-known commentator, Ibn Hayyan the Andalusian claims, in contradiction, that the majority believe that Khizr is not alive.

We conclude that Allah brought Musa to meet a saintly person whose name was Khizr and who had been endowed with some knowledge of those mundane secrets with which Musa had not been endowed. Musa's status is far above that of Khizr. The Qur'an's style of narration shows that he was a *nabi*. It is preferable for us to be brief about what the Qur'an leaves brief and not allow our research to go beyond it. Without doubt, he too died after having completed the full span of his life.

There are very strange anecdotes mentioned in some commentary books but they are all unauthenticated and seem to have been borrowed from Hebrew literature and are unreliable.⁵³

"Majma ul Bharain" is the confluence of two rivers, which two rivers are referred here? That are different opinions about it; but none of them is unauthentic. Some interpreters have taken them as the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea; and this is quite believable and it is possible that at the time of the incident of the meeting of Musa and Khizr took place, there might have been present a line of confluence between the two; because this incident apparently took place between the departure from Egypt and stay in the field of The. Allama Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah holds that this very place is known as Aqba these days.⁵⁴

DEATH OF MUSA --

With supreme patience, in spite of all manner of suffering and opposition, a Prophet like Musa, was engaged in guiding the Children of Israel when the time came for him to bid farewell to this mortal life.

⁵³ Vide al Bidaya wal Nihaya Vol 1; al Bahr ul Moheet Vol. 6; Rooh ul Ma'ani Vol.15; Aini Sharah Bukhari Vol. 7; Fath ul Bari Vol. 6; and Asaba Vol. 1.

⁵⁴ 2 Faiz ul Bari Vol. 1

Bukhari and Muslim record his last days as follows:

Abu Hurayra tells us that when the moment came for Musa to breathe his last, the angel of death presented himself and accosted Musa with the words; "From your Lord accept the message of death." Musa slapped the messenger and blinded one of his eyes. The angel returned to Allah and complained about it, saying that this servant of His did not want to die. Allah restored the angel's eye and commanded him to go again to Musa and tell him that Allah says that Musa should place his hand on a bull, and as many hair as he gathers in his fist, Allah will increase his life by one year for each strand of the hair. The angel came again and gave him the message. Musa asked, what would happen next. The angel answered, "Ultimately, death!" Musa said, "If the end of a longest life is to be death, why should it not be today?" And he prayed to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, "In this last moment bring me nearer to the Holy Land!"

The Prophet ﷺ said that if he were in that country, he would show the spot where Musa was buried, next to the Red Hillock.⁵⁵

Ibn Qatiba thinks that this story of the angel of death and Musa is not one of material fact, but allegorical.⁵⁶

We believe that the problem of life and death is presented here in such a manner that all important phases of it may be made clear; namely, that the human being even though placed in the highest of positions, prophethood, looks upon death as unpleasing, but as soon as Allah makes manifest the reality of death, it becomes the most desirable of things for His near and dear ones. Moreover, whether death be pleasing or unpleasing, it is an inevitable command, not to be avoided in any case. Thus, the desire should not be for a longer life, but that whatever moment of it is there should be one of purity and elevation of morals so that place may be found in the lap of Allah's mercy, and death may become eternal life.

We should now interpret the words of the Tradition quoted above as meaning that when the angel of death appeared before Musa, he was in human form. Musa could not recognise him, just as Abraham and Lot could not at first recognise the angels of punishment. Musa did not like that a stranger should intrude on his privacy, and that he had no right to convey the message of death. Musa was so angry that he slapped the stranger. The angel was in human form &, therefore, under physical effect, an eye was damaged. But unlike those angels who gradually revealed their identity to Abraham & Lot

⁵⁵ Fath ul Bari Vol.6 p.343

⁵⁶ Fath ul Bari Vol.6 p.343

this angel of death disappeared immediately and went to Allah. Allah transformed him to the spiritual form and he was relieved of the defect resulting from a damaged eye.

The death-angel, without acquainting himself with Musa's thought concluded that Musa was enraged at the mention of the word death and did not want to die. He went directly to the Divine Presence and reported that His servant did not want death. To remove the angel's misunderstanding, as well as to vindicate Musa's high status, He commanded the angel to go once again and give Musa the message.

While the angel was receiving his orders, Musa because of the stranger's sudden disappearance, realised forthwith that the matter was not one of human affairs but that of the other world. That is why when the death-angel came again, Musa's way of talking was quite different, and the brief moments of dying before the last breath became a source of lesson and guidance.

This interpretation of the meaning of the Traditions is such that it solves all the questions that have been the subject of argument among the ulema.

The books of the Old Testament and of history tell us that Musa lived to an age of one hundred and twenty years, and there is an interval of about two hundred and fifty years between the death of Abraham and the birth of Musa.⁵⁷

Musa's death is mentioned in several places in the Bible. In one of them the words are:

"And Musa went from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top Pisgah that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan. And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Juda, unto thee utmost sea. And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, and the city of palm trees unto Zour.

And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed; I have caused it to be seen with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Musa the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor, but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

⁵⁷ al Bidaya wal Nihaya Vol. 1.

*And Musa was hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.*⁵⁹

CHARACTERISTIC NATURE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

After reading in depth the events of Musa's life and the Children of Israel the first thing that strikes us, is that there is a strange kind of whimsical capriciousness in them; and ingratitude, rebellion, forgetfulness of obligations received, incitement to mischief, maliciousness and envy are ingredients of their build-up. All this might have been due to their centuries of slavery, because of all the faults slavery is the one cause that creates such base characteristics as degradation of morals, maliciousness and hostile nature.

It is obvious that the prophets of Allah would have to go through the most painful of sufferings and trying of circumstances to bring and keep such a community of humans on the right path. Since Musa was the first prophet through whose efforts they were liberated from slavery to taste of freedom, it was he who had to face the evils of their nature more than others and bear the utmost of sufferings.

Besides the revelation of the Torah as their law for reform and guidance, Allah displayed many a miracle so that their whimsicality might be modified and the capacity for accepting and adhering to truth might develop in them.

These are the tokens which have been stated at length by the Qur'an in Surah Baqar, A'araaf and Ibrahim, where it is declared that of all its contemporary peoples, this community of the Children of Israel has been the centre of Allah's many blessings. But, it is a pity, that in spite of the abundance of benedictions, forgiveness and mercies, their rebellious nature kept asserting itself from time to time, until, finally, they earned the eternal curse of Allah and deprived themselves of all respect both in this world and the next.

This is described in the Verses

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتِيْ الَّتِيْ اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ الْاَيَّهٖ (بقره)
 وَاذْنَحِيْنَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ فِرْعَوْنُ ۗ الْاَيَّهٖ (بقره) وَاذَاتَيْنَا مُوسٰى الْكَيْبَ ۗ
 الْاَيَّهٖ (بقره) وَاذْقَلْتُمْ يُّمُوْسٰى لَنْ نُّصْبِرَ عَلٰى طَعَامٍ وَّاحِدٍ ۗ الْاَيَّهٖ
 (بقره) "وَاِذَا سْتَسْقٰى مُوسٰى لِقَوْمِهٖ" الْاَيَّهٖ (بقره) "وَاذْنَحِيْنَكُمْ"
 الْاَيَّهٖ (اعراف) وَاذْقَالَ مُوسٰى لِقَوْمِهٖ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ الْاَيَّهٖ
 (ابراهيم)

⁵⁹ Deuteronomy : 34/ 1-7

Here, indeed, are lessons and counsel for people of vision.

The question does, however, arise why Allah chose such a people for His bounties and blessings and why the Knower of the visible and invisible did not, from the very beginning, ignore such an obstinate community, and transfer His favours to some other people.

The answer may be found in the history of those times, of the sociology and anthropology as well. You will find that ever since the beginning of historical times,⁶⁰ the nations of the world bear the imprint of Semitic influences in their culture, civilization, religion, social system and politics. No community whatever is an exception.

The Semitic peoples of those ages are known to history as Amaliki, Qutbi, Canannites, Anaqui, Sumeri, etc., the civilization of which people prevailed in Syria, Palestine, East Jordan, Egypt and Iraq. But they were lost so deep down in shirk, unbelief, rebellion, tyranny and transgression that, by comparison, the Children of Israel were better. Their capacity and aptitude for reform were not so hopeless.

You have just read the condition of the Qutbi people in Egypt in the chapters on Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The Amaliki and Canaanites will be next, while some idea of the Sumerians can be formed from one of their leading men, Samiri.

Such were the qualifications of the Israelis for which they were selected. History provides substantial proof that despite their general defects, a small group of them conveyed Allah's message of guidance for a long time throughout the world until, after thousands of years, this blessing was taken away from them and transferred to the Children of Ismail!

The selection of the Israelis was not because of their piety or holiness, but because they were to be made instruments for crushing peoples more evil than themselves. All that was done for them was to make them obedient to the commands of the Divine Being and bring them to the straight path. In this way, Allah took His service from their young generation.

The Old Testament has given this in excellent words:

"Hear, O Israel! Thou art to pass over Jordan this day to gain to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven, a people great and tall,, the Children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and

⁶⁰ This subject requires to be dealt at length for which we do not have sufficient space here.

of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the Children of Anak!

Understand, therefore, that day that the Lord thy God is He which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face; so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the Lord hath said unto thee.

Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee saying,

Not for thy righteousness or for the uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go to possess their land but for the wickedness of these nations doth the Lord thy god drive them out from before thee, and that he perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Understand, herefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.

Remember and forget not how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord."

(Deuteronomy: 9: 1-7)

PRAISE FOR MUSA IN THE QUR'AN –

It is manifest by the manner in which praises have been showered on Musa in the Qur'an and Traditions that next to the Prophet Muhammed ﷺ and Abraham, he is a messenger of great resolve and among the prophets possesses a high status.

In other words, Musa's life, from childhood until his death passed through such extraordinary conditions that after studying them one is compelled to acknowledge his eminence and admit that the sufferings he went through at the hands of Pharaoh, his people, and, then, the Isrealis for the sake of their reform, have no parallel in the life of any other prophet, with the exception of Abraham and Muhammed ﷺ. On the basis of the events of Musa's life, the Qur'an tells us in a number of places that such great material is not to be found of the carelessness of communities and nations, ignoring the truth,

disobedience and rebellion, opposition and enmity, insolence, insulting the prophet and causing him anguish and suffering; and the prophet's patience and self-control, and continuous effort for guidance and reform of the ummah and nation, is not to be found to serve as lesson and vision as exists in the events connected with Musa and the Children of Israel.

While Verses of the Qur'an declare the awe-inspiring grandeur and resoluteness of Musa as a prophet, the following Verses, in particular, announce praises and, in the context, of Haroon also.

We have in Surah e Maryam:

وَإِذْ كُنَّا فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مُخْلَصًا وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا ()
 وَنَادَيْنَاهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنَاهُ نَجِيًّا () وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ مِنْ
 رَحْمَتِنَا أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ نَبِيًّا () (ع ٤)

"And make mention in the Scripture of Musa. Lo! He was chosen, and he was a messenger (of Allah), a prophet. And We called him from the right slope of the Mount and brought him high in communion. And We bestowed on him of Our mercy his brother Haroon, a prophet (likewise).

(Maryam : 51-53)

And in Surah e al A'raaf:

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَتِي وَبِكَلَامِي (ع ١٧)

He said: O Musa! I have preferred thee above mankind by My message and by My speaking (unto thee) (Verse 144)

Bukhari and Muslim report the Prophet ﷺ as saying, "Do not give me precedence over Musa, because, on the Judgment Day when people will have become terror-stricken and fainted, I will be the first to regain consciousness and I will see Musa standing and holding the pedestal of heaven, Allah's throne. I cannot say whether he regained his consciousness before me, or that he was exempted from the day's loss of senses in compensation for having fainted on Mount Sinai."

Ibn Kathir remarks that the Prophet's words, "Do not give me precedence over Musa", are only out of modesty; for, he himself has said in another place, "I say without the least pride that I am the sirdar of all the Children of Adam". Besides his being the last of the prophets itself proves this contention. As for

the incident of the Last Day, it is only a partial precedence. The totality of virtues and achievements is not affected by it. However, the spirit of the words of the Tradition does vindicate the greatness of Musa.

In Surah e al Nisa we have:

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَا هُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ
وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا ()
(ع ٢٣)

And messengers We have mentioned unto thee before, and messengers We have not mentioned unto thee, and Allah spake directly unto Musa. (Verse 164)

In Surah e Saaffaat:

وَلَقَدْ مَنَّا عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ () وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمَا وَقَوْمَهُمَا مِنَ الْكَرْبِ
الْعَظِيمِ () وَنَصَرْنَاهُمْ فَكَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ () وَأَتَيْنَاهُمَا الْكِتَابَ الْمُسْتَبِينَ ()
وَهَدَيْنَاهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ () وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِي الْآخِرِينَ () سَلَامٌ
عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ () إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ () إِنَّهُمَا مِنْ
عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ()
(ع ٤)

And We verily gave grace unto Musa and Haroon and saved them and their people from great distress; and helped them so that they became the victors. And We gave them the clear Scripture and showed them the right path. And We left for them among the later folk (the salutation): Peace be unto Musa and Haroon. Lo! Thus We reward the good. Lo! Thy were two of our believing slaves. (Verses: 114-122)

In Surah al Ahzab:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ إِذْ أُوذُوا مُوسَىٰ فَبَرَّاهُ اللَّهُ مِمَّا قَالُوا
وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَجِيهًا ()
(ع ٩)

O ye who believe! Be Not as those who slandered Musa., but Allah proved his innocence of that which they alleged, and he was well-esteemed in Allah's sight. (Verse: 69)

Moreover, the conversation that took place between Musa and the Prophet ﷺ on the night of the *mairaj*, as given in Bukhari and Muslim, also confirms the eminent grandeur of Musa.

There is another Tradition in Bukhari and Muslim reported by Abdullah b. Masud, that when the Prophet ﷺ had once distributed some things, a man a (hypocrite) remarked that in this distribution regard had not been paid to Allah's pleasure. A Muslim reported these words to the Prophet ﷺ. He was enraged, his face becoming red with anger, and he said: "May Allah have mercy on Musa, for he was made to suffer even more than this, but he bore all his sufferings with patience!" meaning that in response to the hypocrite's words, he would, like other resolute prophets, bear them with patience!

In short, there are countless points of excellence that give evidence of Musa being a prophet of very high stature, and provide for us a store of lessons and guidance.

A SUBTLE POINT OF HISTORY -

Anyone acquainted with the history of the Children of Israel knows that long before Jesus, many of them had settled in the Hijaz, where around Timah, Qaza Valley, Fidak, Khayber and Yathreb (Medina), having acquired property built houses, synagogues, religious schools, fortresses and army cantonments, they had developed a permanent civilization of their own. According to Arab historians, clans, such as Qurayza, Nadeer, Qinqah, Harith had adopted these places as their permanent country.

Two important questions arise:

One: What was the compulsion that forced the Jews to migrate from the land called Palestine, the Holy Land, according to their belief, where milk and honey flowed in rivulets?

Two: If they did have to leave their own beloved peace of earth, what was the reason that made them skip over green, fertile and pleasant nearby regions, to travel far to places almost barren, and where the means of subsistence were sparse. Egypt, was quite near and so was Iraq, once their migration-abode, while Syria was in their immediate north., and these lands were extremely fertile and centres of civilization.

History answers the first question by telling us that in B.C 701 the armies of Titus, the Roman Emperor, occupied Palestine, and laid waste its urban places, and destroyed Jerusalem. The stronghold Jews prided themselves over, of the strength and glory of whose construction they used to quote as examples, and of the many burnished things and religious utensils they boasted, the tyrant had ruined and thrown away, and plundered the valuables and treasures.

The answer to the second question is that the Jews had read in their sacred Books and heard from their prophets that Allah, at some time to come, would

revive His promise among their brethren, the Children of Ismail. They also knew that the prophet of this revival would come to Yathreb (Medina), his abode after emigrating from his home-town.; and he would make it his centre of invitation to the Divine message; that his life would be victorious over the idolaters; and the announcements of Truth made by Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and Musa would once again flourish at his hands!

For this reason, when they were humbled and persecuted by a heathen king, they looked upon this region around Yathreb as their last place of refuge, and made it their homeland, a region lying between Palestine and the metropolis where the new prophet would appear. Here they awaited the prophet to come and the return of their own glory!

The Book Isaiah clearly writes that this prophet would appear near Mount Sal'a. And Medina Valley is situated between Mount Uhad to its east and Mount Sal'a to its west.

"Sing to the Lord a new song, His praises from the end of the earth! Let sea roar and all that fills it, the coastland and their inhabitants. Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the inhabitants of Sila sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to the Lord, and declare His glory in the coastlands. The Lord goes forth like a mighty man of war He stirs up His fury; He cries out, He shouts aloud, He shows himself mighty against His foes.

*For a long time I have held my peace, I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in travail; I will gasp and pant; I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbage; I will turn the rivers into islands and dry up the pools. And I will lead the blind in a way that they know not: in paths that they have not known, I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I will do, and I will not forsake them. They shall be turned back and utterly put to shame who trust in graven images, who say to molten images, "you are our gods."*⁶⁰

It is a well-known fact that after Musa no prophet appeared, with the single exception of the Prophet Muhammed ﷺ, who fought against idolatry, resulting in the permanent defeat of the idolaters.

Now who is the prophet Kedar? And where is Sila situated? Why are mountains and islands mentioned again and again? And what is the "new song", besides the song of the Israelis?

⁶⁰ Isaiah Ch. 42 verses 10 - 17 quoted by Najjar in Qasas ul Anmbiya.

All these words declare aloud that the shariah law and the advent of a prophet are related to the region of the Hijaz in the Arab island. Is this not what the Qur'an says by way of living history, drawing the attention of the Jews?

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا مِن
 قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا
 كَفَرُوا بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ () (بقره ع ۱۱)

And when there cometh unto them a Scripture from Allah confirming that in their possession --- though before they were asking for a triumph over those who disbelieved---And when there cometh unto them that which they know (to be the Truth) they disbelieve therein. The curse of Allah is on disbelievers! (al Baqar : 89)

Whenever these people of the Scripture, the Jews, were defeated in their wars against idolaters, they used to pray that Allah send the awaited prophet soon to demolish idolatry, and, according to His promise, make them victorious. But when that prophet came, they were lost in their maliciousness that this prophet should have been an Israeli and not of the Children of Ismail!

In view of the latest historical research it may be said that the above mentioned argument of questions and answers is futile because the Jews living in the Hijaz comprised new Arab generations and were not of Israeli descent, because one of the distinguishing characteristics of Jews is that no matter where they settle down, they do not give up their Jewish names, but the ancestors of those of Hejaz carried names such as Qurayza, Nadir, Qeenqah which are quite distinguished from Israeli names.

If this assertion means that the Jews living in the Hijaz were only the new generation of Arabs, and there were no tribes of Jewish descent among them, then this is quite wrong and against historical facts. History shows that among these tribes there were also those tribes which migrated from Palestine and settled in Hijaz.

But if it implies that Jewish tribes lived here along with Arab tribes, among whom Hebrew seed was sown because of them, then, the first question rises again, the answer to which is that given above.

LESSONS –

This lengthy historical account of Musa, the Children of Israel, Pharaoh and his people is not a mere story, but a narrative full of wisdom. It relates the battle between Truth and falsehood, tyranny and justice, here is the tussle

between slavery and freedom; elevation of the downtrodden and helpless, and extermination of the oppressor; triumph of Truth and degradation of falsehood; manifestation of patience and gratitude; and tragic results of thanklessness. Here are countless lessons inviting every one according to his aptitude and capacity.

We may specially draw the reader's attention to some of them:

1. If some calamity befall one, it should be overcome with patience and joy. Doing so is sure to bring success. The lives of Musa and Haroon bear testimony to this.
2. He who relies on Allah for his personal affairs, and with sincerity of heart, looks upon Him as his support. Allah eases his difficulties, and changes his sufferings with relief and glowing success. Musa killing an Egyptian, Egyptians consulting one another to kill Musa, then one of these very Egyptians going to inform Musa of their plan, and his escaping to Midian, his receiving Divine inspiration and being appointed to the exalted position of prophethood, are vivid examples.
3. However great the power of falsehood, it is rendered futile for him whose attachment with Allah is at the stage of Love.

Compare the material power of Pharaoh with that of Musa: one altogether without means and helpless, the other, a despotic tyrant, full of pride and arrogance, but when Pharaoh tells him in full court, "*Musa, I think you are under the spell of some magic.*" Musa replied without hesitation, "*You know well, that these tokens have been sent down as lessons by the Lord of the heavens and the earth, and I look upon you as lost.*"

That is, the consequence of disobedience despite these obvious portents is nothing but death and perdition.

4. When one stands up to do or die for the triumph of Truth, Allah creates for him a helper from among the ranks of his enemies, worshippers of falsehood. When Pharaoh and his chiefs decided to kill Musa, some one arose from among themselves who fully defended Musa. And when Musa killed an Egyptian, and it was decided to take Musa's life, it was a Allah fearing Egyptian who informed him of the decision, and advised him to escape to another country which, ultimately, resulted in Musa's triumphs.
5. If one relishes faith even once, and accepts it with heartfelt sincerity, he gets so intoxicated with Divine Love that the same voice of Truth emerges from every fibre of his being.

Is it not a marvel that the magicians who were so over-awed by Pharaoh and impatient to carry out his orders, and were bargaining for rewards and

emoluments, only moments after were so filled with faith at the blessed hands of Musa, that the worst of Pharaoh's threats sounded like play to them, and they spontaneously declared:

قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْتِرَكَ عَلَىٰ مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا فَاقْضِ مَا
أَنْتَ قَاضٍ ۖ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

"We will never refute those clear portents and disobey the order of God Who created us all the most you can do is to decide our fate in this world."

6. The fruit of patience is always sweet. However bitter may be the sufferings one has to go through to achieve that fruit, but when it blossoms it will be pleasant. For ages the Isrealis suffered from slavery, had their male offspring slaughtered and their daughters serve as servants and slaves and bore degradation, but the time did come when their patience brought them its luscious fruit!, and Pharaoh's extermination and destruction and their good conduct opened vistas of all manner of triumph for them.

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا

7 The worst of consequences of living as slaves under domination of others is that the spirit of valor and chivalry is crushed and the slaves look upon their disgraceful peace as a blessing and its trifles as greatness, and looks upon the struggle for existence as harassing. Living example of this are the Israelis who appear to be so lifeless in spite of Musa showing them enough portents, doing his best to encourage them and to believe in Allah's promises of success, yet they are always suspicious and dismayed.

The well-known words they spoke when ordered to go into the Holy Land are recorded in history:

فَاذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَا إِنَّا هُنَا قَاعِدُونَ

"Go thou and thy Lord and fight but we will sit here." (and watch).

8. Inheritance of land or inheriting a country belongs only to a people which though without means, courageously faces all manner of difficulties and patiently relying on Allah is steadfast in its struggle.

9. No matter how great the power of falsehood may be, ultimately it will fail, and successful will be only the righteous and valiant.

وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

10. It is Allah's way that the day inevitably comes when those very nations the tyrants and oppressors look upon as weak and despicable, Allah makes inheritors of land and lords of governance and power, and the glory of the oppressors is reduced to dust!

وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً
وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ () وَنُكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ
وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ () (قصص ع ١)

"And We desired to show favour unto those who were oppressed in the earth and to make them examples, and to make them the inheritors. And to establish them in the earth and to show Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts that which they feared from them." (al Qasas: 5-6)

11. It has always been the way of the rulers, and groups of power and wealth to oppose the Call to Truth, but the history of nations also tells us that they have invariably always met with defeat, and the consequences to them have been failure. Not only is this true of the events of Musa's life, but also of those of the prophets, consequences of opposition to whose invitation to Truth have ever been lessons to people of vision, as history bears testimony.

12. The law of Allah for those individuals or group that deliberately rebel against Truth, knowing it to be Truth and deny His portents and is obedient, is that their aptitude for acceptance of Truth is dead, because such is the result of their own persistent rebellions.

سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ

"I shall turn away their eyes from My tokens who without right are rebellious in the earth"

13. It is a great mistake to relapse into indifference and rebellion and become like the enemies of Truth after achieving success because of the Truth, instead of showing gratitude to Allah and devotions to Him. It is sad to think that after being relieved of Pharaoh, and crossing the Red Sea, the Israelis were lost in such relapse.

14. It is a great mistake also not to act upon the faith and follow the promptings of one's own lower desires, and carve excuses after them in respect of Allah's commands, and think in self-deception that religion has been obeyed and one's own wishes also satisfied. To do wrong knowing it to be wrong is not so injurious as making the wrong to look right, and then, by

perverse logic, making the forbidden to be permissible. Because of this, Divine punishment has very often visited many nations.

The Israelis had behaved in a similar way in connection with the Sabbath and were visited with Divine wrath. Game was forbidden for them on the Sabbath, the whole day being appointed for devotions. They abided by the law for some time but not for long. In the early part of the night, some of them would dig ditches by the river-side and turn the direction of the water to them. The fish would drop into the ditches, from which, they would take them out in the evening. If the devout people objected to such practice, they would boastfully answer that the Sabbath had not been broken. But when Allah's punishment came, they realised how dangerous artifices could be.

Whether one accepts Truth or not, it is the duty of the inviter to Truth never to give up sounding His call. Some of those who warned the violators of the Sabbath told others among themselves not to take the trouble because they would never listen, but the more determined and strong-minded of the inviters to Truth, replied,

مَعْدِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

"On Judgment Day we shall, at least, be able to plead that we did our duty, and what do we know about the future? Who knows that they might return to obedience."

16. If an oppressive and cruel ruler is established over a people, it is no proof of his righteousness before Allah. Rather, he is a curse of Allah inflicted on the subject people because of their misdeeds. But such becomes the dominance of the oppressor over the minds of the oppressed people that they look upon their oppression as a mercy of Allah, a reward for their conduct. This is proved in that part of the life of the Israelis during which Musa used to incite them to have themselves strive for freedom and relieved of Pharaoh, but they would express their contentment with their slavish, happy life. As the Qur'an says:

وَأَذَاتَا ذُنَّ رَبُّكَ لَيَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَن يَسُومُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ
(الاعراف ع ٢١)

And (remember) when thy Lord proclaimed that he would raise against them till the Day of Resurrection those who would lay on them a cruel torment. (al A'raaf: 167)

18. When Pharaoh's rebellion and that of his people exceeded the extreme limits, Musa prayed Allah that He punish them for their evil deeds because they refuse to come to the right path. But as soon as the moment came for the

prayer to be heard and signs of Allah's punishment began to appear, Pharaoh and his people would plead with Musa that if this time the punishment were averted they would certainly believe his word. But no sooner than the punishment was averted, they would again take to their former arrogance and rebellion. In this manner they kept getting respite after respite for sometime, but when they did not desist from their crooked ways, Divine punishment overtook them suddenly and exterminated them for ever.

Similarly, the Sabbath breakers were given respite for some time, until, at last, Divine punishment put an end to them.

This and the events of many other communities show that when a nation or group becomes involved in rebellion and bad conduct, it is not, according to Divine law, visited immediately by punishment, but respite is given it from time to time so that it might repent, understand and reform. But if it continues to persist in disobedience and rebellion, Allah seizes it in a powerful grasp, and it is destroyed.

19. It is unbecoming of anyone, whether prophet or any other, to claim that he possesses more knowledge than anyone else in the world. The matter should be left to Allah's knowledge, because, as the Qur'an says:

فَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ

“Above every man of knowledge there is another.”

When Musa said that he was more knowledgeable than anyone else, Allah rebuked him and arranging his meeting with Khizr impressed on him that however great his knowledge and virtue, the mysteries of Allah's knowledge are so limitless, with a few of which related to the mystery of the working of creation. He had endowed on one venerable person, but Musa could not understand them.

20. For the *millat e Islamia*, slavery is a great curse, a terrible wrath of Allah. To be content with it tantamount to be content with Allah's curse and His wrath. Inviting Pharaoh to the path of Truth, Musa's first demand was that he liberate the Children of Israel from slavery, so that together with him, they might worship Allah the One and heathen dominance might not influence them in any department of religion.

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يُفْرَعُونَ إِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ () حَقِيقٌ عَلَىٰ
أَنْ لَا أَقُولَ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَأَرْسِلْ
مَعِيَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ () (اعراف ع ١٣)

Musa said, Lo! I am a messenger from the Lord of the world, approved upon condition that I speak concerning Allah nothing but the truth. I come unto you (lords of Egypt)

with a clear proof from your Lord. So let the Children of Israel go with me. (al A'raaf: 104-105)

فَاتِيَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ () أَنْ أَرْسِلَ مَعَنَا بِنِي

إِسْرَائِيلَ () (شعراء ع ٢)

And come together unto Pharaoh and say. Lo! We bear a message of the Lord of the Worlds. (saying). Let the children of Israel go with us. (al Shu-ara: 16-17)

This Verse of Surah e Shu-ara seems to express the importance of this subject as so high that the purpose of the advent of so great and eminent a prophet as Musa was that he should liberate the famous descendants of the prophets, the Children of Israel from the oppression and heathen dominance of Pharaoh.

This will be found true if the Verses of Surah e A'raaf are studied in depth. In Pharaoh's court Musa first announces his status as prophet, then offers Allah's invitation to right guidance, and drawing Pharaoh's attention to the clear portents, states that this is the object of his advent.

فَأَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

"Free the Children of Israel and let them go with me."

It is also noteworthy that although Musa stayed in Egypt for a long time after he had announced his advent, the Divine Law (Torah) was not revealed until the Children were freed from slavery of Pharaoh, and, relieved of their oppression, had not returned to the Holy Land.

فَاغْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْبَصَارِ



**QASAS-UL-
QUR'AN**

VOLUME - II

HAZRAT YOUSHAH

(Joshua) b. NUN ﷺ

The Old Testament gives many details on Joshua in connection with the life of the prophet Moses. We too have mentioned him in a few places in this work. He was an attendant of Moses, and, after Moses's death, became his caliph and successor to the prophethood. He was one of the men who had gone to Canaan to find out the conditions prevailing there, and when Moses asked the Israelis to move there, he was the first to encourage them, reminding them of Allah's promise and urging them to fight in His cause. Victory, he told them, was certain.

The Old Testament tells us that Allah had told the Israelis in Moses's lifetime that Youshaa was his chosen slave, and under his leadership, they would clear the Holy Land of its persecutors.

"And the Lord said unto Moses. Take thee Joshua. the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thy hand upon him. And set him before Eleasor the priest and before all the congregation, and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him that all the Children of Israel may be obedient."

"And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses laid his hands upon him, and the Children of Israel hearkened unto him".²

After Moses had passed away and after forty years of wandering about it was under Youshaa's leadership that the new generation of the Children of Israel entered the Holy Land vanquishing over the tyrannical powers of Canaan, Syria and eastern Jordan.

Youshaa in the Qur'an —

Youshaa is not mentioned by name in the Qur'an. Only in Surah-e-Kahf is a young comrade-in-travel of Moses mentioned in two places, when Moses went to meet Khizr.

¹ Numbers Ch. 27: 19-20

² Deuteronomy Ch. 34:9

وَأَذَقَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَّهُ - فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتَّهُ

In a Tradition from Ubai b. Ka'ab the name of the comrade is given as Youshaa. Thus he is indirectly mentioned in the Qur'an. The peoples of the Scripture agree that he was a Prophet. The Old Testament has a separate Book titled after him.

Descent —

Youshaa is a descendant of Joseph's line of the Israelies.

Youshaa, son of Nun, son of Ephraim, son of Joseph son of Jacob, son of Abraham.

It redounds to the glory of Allah that Joseph on whose account a family of seventy had departed from Canaan and with honour had settled in Egypt, today under the leadership of the grandson of that same Joseph, now numbering hundreds of thousands, re-enters Canaan with that same honour and glory.

After forty years Allah commanded Youshaa to advance with a caravan of the Children of Israel towards the Promised Land, and battling with the Amalkites another tyrannical peoples, defeat them, Allah's assistance being with them. We have in the Old Testament:

"Now after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass, that the Lord spoke unto Youshaa the son of Nun, Moses's minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead: now, therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give unto them, even to the Children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses from the wilderness and this side Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

There shall not be any man able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee".

(Youshaa Ch. 1 verses 1-5)

Youshaa announced the message of Allah to the Israelis, and all of them left the Sinai desert and advanced towards Jericho, the first city on their way in Canaan. Here they challenged its people, who came out to fight. A tough battle followed resulting in their utter defeat and triumph for the Israelis.

² Deuteronomy Ch. 34:9

Similarly, other strongholds were taken, until all the Holy Land was cleared of the heathens, and the Israelis once again became its masters.

The Old Testament tells us that when the Israelis prepared themselves for battle, they carried the Tabernacle with them on Allah's command. It contained the staff of Moses, the robes of Aaron, and a jar of manna. Allah had told them that they should preserve some manna so that future generations may witness how He had blessed them.

Ibn Asir says that Moses had in his own lifetime, appointed Youshaa as the commander of the Israeli forces, as well as his junior officers, and the division of the tribes.

This was very like what the Prophet ﷺ did in his own lifetime with Ussama appointing him as commander of the Muslim forces for the Syrian campaign, and had with his own hands prepared a banner for them. But he passed away before the Muslims could march out.

Caliph Abu Bakr sent Ussama and the Muslim forces to Syria, a campaign that proved to be a precedent for the Muslim victories in Iran, Iraq and against Rome.

Similarly Moses, on Allah's command, appointed Youshaa as commander and himself completed the initial stages of the campaign, but before the Israelis could march out, he passed away. Allah also endowed Youshaa with prophethood. At his hands the Holy Land was cleaned of heathen despots, the success over Jericho becoming the starting point.

The Qur'an does not state which city Youshaa first conquered, but simply as a "town". Naming the "town" is not relevant to the Qur'an's objective.

Hafiz Imaduddin says that the reference is to Jerusalem, and Jericho is wrong because it does not lie on the direct route, nor did Allah promise Jericho to the Israelis, but though Imaduddin is right in so far as Jerusalem is inferred by the word "*qaryah*", his reasoning is not baseless, because even if Youshaa planned to march to Jerusalem he would have to go through Canaan, the first city of which is Jericho. This is clear from any map of the regions that the way from the Sinai desert to Jerusalem cannot be traversed without passing through Canaan. Because Allah had promised to bring the Israelis back to the land of their fathers, the whole of the Holy Land, Canaan, not to just one city or Jerusalem. It was from Canaan that the Israelis had migrated in the time of Joseph and Jacob to settle in Egypt.

Both the arguments of Ibn Kathir are weak. But it is correct that Jerusalem is implied by the word *qaryah* because Youshaa first defeated the Amalckites in Jericho, by Allah's command, and conquering the Canaan region arrived in

Palestine and took Jerusalem as well. This was the ultimate objective which being achieved, Allah proclaimed His command which is mentioned in the Qur'an.

Allah commanded that when the Israelis enter the city as conquerors, they should do so with humility and gratitude to Him and bowing in fear of Him, seeking His forgiveness, not as arrogant, haughty people, so that distinction may be maintained between those of His servants who are grateful and those who are proud and rebellious.

But after victory, their real nature came to the surface, and they stepped into the city with pride in their hearts, strutting and heads held high, and, vulgarity, instead of words of repentance on their lips. This was like jesting with Allah's command. So, at last, the law of natural retribution had effect:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَاَدْخُلُوا
الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَايَاكُمْ وَ سَنَزِيدُ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ () فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ()

(بقره ج ۱ ع ۶)

And when we said: go into this township and eat freely of that which is therein, and enter the gate prostrate, and say 'repentance', We will forgive you your sins and will increase (reward) for the right doers.

But those who did wrong, changed the word which had been told them for another saying, and We sent down upon evil-doers wrath from heaven for their evil-doing.

(Al Baqar: 58-59)

وَإِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا
حِطَّةٌ وَاَدْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا انْغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتِكُمْ سَنَزِيدُ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ () فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ
فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ()

(اعراف ج ۹ ع ۲۰)

And when it was said unto them: Dwell in this township and eat therefrom whence ye will, and say, 'Repentance', and enter the gate prostrate, We shall forgive you your sins: We shall increase (reward) for the right doers.

But those of them who did wrong, changed the word which had been told them for another saying and We sent down upon them wrath from heaven for their wrongdoing.

(Al A'raaf: 161, 162)

In these Verses, the word *hittatun* has been used. But what does it mean? And to what phrase had the Israelis changed the word? Both these question need clarification.

Abdullah ibn Abbas says that the word implies *أى مغفرة استغفروا* and Qatada says that it implies *احطط عنا خطايانا* "Forgive us and circumscribe our faults!". That is, the word *hittatun* is an abbreviation of these prayers, just as is a short form of

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ كَمَا "بِسْمِ اللَّهِ" أَوْ لِأَحْوَالٍ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ كَمَا
"حَقَّقَهُ" أَوْ لِأَلِهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ كَمَا "هَلْهَلَهُ"

Bukhari quotes the Prophet ﷺ as commenting that "the Israelis said: *حبة في شعرة* which mean, "We need strong beads in our hair"

This amounted to jesting with Allah's command, and, instead of prostrating, they strutted with arrogance.

يَزْحَفُونَ عَلَى آسَاتِهِمْ

People generally understand by this Tradition that Israelis dragged themselves on their buttocks on the ground, though such a manner of exhibiting arrogance and pride is not prevalent anywhere, rather, it ridicules one's ownself. It is not even jesting with others. Abdullah b. Masud's version of the commentary is correct that at the time of entering the city, Israelis, instead of walking with humility, strutted in, with heads strained high, as a proud, and vain man does, moving his hips.

Allah here distinguishes between his sincere, faithful servants and the proud and haughty. The obedient do not fight for their own glory but only to destroy the tyranny of the rebellious and tyrannical. Thus justice is established and the banner of Allah's command held high. They believe that:

الْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ

"Persecution is worse than slaughter"

Therefore, when they meet with success over the heathen, they do not express their satisfaction with show of pride, but expressing their fear of Allah and prostrating before Him; and when they enter a city they do so as grateful servants of the Divine Being. When the Prophet ﷺ, after purging Makkah of its paganism, he bowed so low on the back of his camel that his beard brushed against the saddle of the harness, and when he entered the courtyard of the Ka'ba, he fell immediately in prostration and offered eight ra'ka of prayers.

This example was followed by the Caliphs. When Omer took Jerusalem and Sa'd b. Abu Waqas conquered Iran they did not go in as proud kings but as servants of Allah, full of humility and gratitude; and when Omer stepped on the holy ground of the Synagogue and Sa'ad in the palace of Chosroes the first thing they did was offer prayers, prostrating before Allah, expressing practical acknowledgement of their humility and helplessness. When they fought, they fought like lions, and when they triumphed, they were humble before Allah and acclaimed gratitude to Him, and were tender and compassionate towards the conquered people.

In short, the Children of Israel received the punishment for their ill deeds, the punishment of Allah. What that punishment was, the Qur'an does not give detail. It uses the words رَجِزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ *"Punishment from the heavens"*, and this is enough for our guidance as a lesson.

The words of Sura-e A'raaf قَبَلُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ *"Wrong-doers among them"*, show that all the Israelis were not guilty of the disobedience referred to here. There was among them a group that was obedient and stood with Youshaa.

Lessons:

The most relevant and thought provoking lesson here is that it is man's human and moral duty that when one achieves success and attains his objective, he should not out of pride and arrogance think that this is the result of his own ability; but be humble and grateful to Allah, admit his own utter helplessness and bow his head so that Allah's mercy may take him in its fold, and he may do well both in this world and the next.

One should not despair of Allah even in the worst of circumstances, for, if one is persecuted, Allah's munificence will not leave him deprived, though some delay there might be.

If a community on whom Allah's benediction come by way of manifest signs and portents, is ungrateful and rebellions, Allah's punishment too comes down upon it very soon, because its disobedience and rebellion come after its experience and witnessing. It, therefore, deserves the most severe of chastisement.



HAZRAT HIZKIEL (Ezekiel) ﷺ

There is a long list of prophets coming after Moses down to Jesus Christ. How many of them came during these centuries is known only to Allah. The Qur'an mentions some of these prophets by name and in detail, others only cursorily. The Old Testament adds some names to those mentioned in the Qur'an and also some events.

There are differences about their order of advent. We prefer that given by Ibn Kathir and Tibri and shall narrate the events of the lives of these prophets accordingly.

It is agreed, between history and the Old Testament that Joshua succeeded to the prophethood after Moses and Aaron. Caleb b. Yuhanna led the Israeli people, but not as a prophet, though he was the husband of Moses's sister Maryam, Imran's daughter.¹

Tabari writes that after Moses, Aaron and Joshua, it was Hizkiel who led the Israelis, spiritually and in their secular affairs.

Name Parentage and Prophethood

The Old Testament tells us that he was the son of Boaz the priest, and that his name was Hizqi-el or Hizkiel.² In Hebrew, the suffix indicates great honour and the meaning of 'Hizqi' is power and strength. In Arabic the name would mean Quadrat Ullah. It is said that his father died when Hizkiel was but a child. By the time of his advent as prophet, his mother had become very old, and he was known as Ibn al Ujooz.³

For a long time, Hizkiel performed his duty as a prophet among the Israelis.

In the Qur'an

In the Qur'an Hizkiel is not mentioned by name. But in Surah e al Baqar certain events are mentioned which, according to ancient scholars, can be only those connected with Hizkiel.

¹ Tarikh e Ibn Kathir. vol-2, p 3.

² The Book of Ezekiel. Among Israelis, the word *kahin*, here translated as 'priest', is used for an accomplished sheikh and scholar.

³ Son of an old woman.

On the authority of Abdullah Ibn Abbas and some other Companions of the Prophet ﷺ that when a king of the Israelis or the prophet Hizkiel, ordered them to get ready for war against such and such an enemy, and carry out their duty to Allah, a great many of them ran away for fear of their lives to a far off valley where, they thought, they would escape death.

The prophet Hizkiel was angry and invoked a curse on them, either because they had disobeyed Allah's command or because they had tried to avoid the verdict of fate. Whatever the reason may be, Divine vengeance fell over them and they perished.

A week later Hizkiel passed that way and felt sorry for them and prayed the Lord Almighty to relieve them of their punishment of death so that their lives may become a lesson for them as well as for others. The prophet's prayer was answered, the dead came to life again becoming a lesson for everyone.

Ibn Kathir's commentary tells us that this group of Israelis was an inhabitant of Dadarvan, at that time a few miles from the metropolis Wasat and was well-known. They went away to the valley of Oonoih where they were punished with death. The words of the Qur'an are:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ ۖ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ۖ ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ (١)

(بقره ج ٢ ع ١٦)

Bethink thee (O Muhammaed) of those of old who went forth from their habitations in their thousands fearing death, and Allah said unto them, Die, and then he brought them back to life. Lo! Allah is a Lord of kindness unto mankind, but most of mankind give not thanks. (al Baqar : 243)

Escape from Jihad

In Muhammadi shariyah also, running away from fighting in the cause of Allah is the greatest sin next only to *shyrik*. This is because when one has faith in Allah, he submits his whole self, life and wealth to Allah, ---Islam being the name of such submission--- he does not retain to himself the right to try to save his life against Allah's command. Cowardice and Islam cannot go together. Courage is the crest of a Muslim on the pathway of Islam.

Similarly when one attains the faith that good and evil, death and life are in the hands of the dispensation of the Lord of the Universe he cannot even for a moment think Allah's dispensation that his excuses can thwart Allah's

decision; and that if his fate is according to that verdict, in another situation, it is inapplicable.

In Islam, the philosophy of the fate is that one should be firm in his belief. His duty is to carry out the commands of Allah; and if there is danger to life and property in such obedience, there is nothing one can do about it. If Allah's verdict has decided already on the destruction of life or property, circumstances will arise to carry out the verdict. This is the faith that makes one courageous, and keeps one away from cowardice. One's eyes, then, fixed on the execution of duty, and looking upon the mundane affair as above one's control, becomes indifferent to them.

Islam, has never taught that fate is to become inactive, give up effort and sit waiting for help from the mysterious unseen, give up execution of duty, believing that whatever is to happen will happen. Such thinking is actually the product of cowardice which keeps one away from performance of duty, lures one to ease and comfort and leads to humiliation and dishonour.

Jihad verses confirming the anecdote –

The Tradition recorded concerning these Verses is supported also by the fact that these Verses are followed immediately by the Verses on jihad wherein Muslims are urged to fight in the path of Allah. Because such fighting invites to selflessness and sacrifice, and extinguishes the fear of death from the heart. It has been thought proper that an incident pertaining to the Israelis should be mentioned in which those who ran away for fear of death were made to die in punishment so that Muslims may learn a lesson from it, and hating cowardice, become full of courage and valour.

Life after death --

All this is according to the majority of the commentators. Ibn Kathir says that giving life back to the dead was meant to be a lesson for those who deny the physical rising of the dead on Judgement Day because among the Israelis there was a group that denied the body's resurrection.

Although we have discussed this in the previous pages, we consider a repetition here necessary, because when it is established by experts on spiritualism that the soul has its own existence independent of the body; that the soul continues to live even after the body has decomposed and its organism destroyed, there is no reason why the rearrangement of the physical components of the body and returning to life after death, should be denied, which becomes necessary as a miracle sometimes in special circumstances to confirm the prophets in this very world.

Those readers who have gone through our discussion on miracles in Part One of this work will appreciate, and find an answer to their suspicion that although according to the general law a second life is impossible in this world and bodily resurrection will take place only on the Last Day and not before, yet, for some special reasons, under a special law, this appears not only possible to the mind but has actually happened at times.

As against this majority version, Ibn Jarir holds that whatever has been said in these Verses is only metaphorical, stated in Qur'an to convey a lesson to those who flee the battlefield, no particular occasion is referred to that may have taken place in the history of the Jews.

We believe that the majority version is correct because the order in which the Qur'an has stated the subject is that before these Verses some commands are stated regarding divorce matters, and there is no reference to jihad. After the latter comes the Verse regarding jihad. Therefore, had these verses been for urging to jihad, then for clearer elucidation, the command for jihad would have come first and then the consequences to those who shirk jihad would have been mentioned, but here it is the other way round. First the example is given and then comes the Verse on jihad.

Therefore, the correct interpretation is that when the command for jihad was intended, an incident of the Israelies is mentioned that in former times Allah's punishment fell on those who shirked jihad. After this the command is given to the believers in the Qur'an to prepare. The psychological effect of this style is that disobedience becomes difficult, and the misgivings and doubts which crop at a time when life is being demanded, are evaporated for one of righteous temperament, and he gets ready to sacrifice his life for the cause of Truth.

LESSONS—

The lessons that appear most obvious to us are:

1. If one is upright by nature and of proper temperament, it is enough to draw his attention to the right way only once, then one's own mind by itself takes to the right path and finds out by itself the ultimate objective but if crookedness takes hold of the psyche due to external causes, the individual cannot be normalised even by repeated calls of Allah; one's aptitudes are paralysed and are lost in indifference until becoming false. And now as they become what the Qur'an describes as

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ

"Allah has sealed their hearts, and on the ears and their eyes is a covering"

Then Allah's terrible punishment overtakes them for all time, becoming a target for His wrath, deserving the punishment.

ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ

"Shame and misery and curses overtake them and wrath from Allah"

Constant rebellion against Allah's commands had pushed them on the other path. Even as late Hizkiel's time they were dragging along this evil road. At the same time there was always a small group of them which bowed its head before the guidance that the prophets gave them, and in spite of stumbling and errors, did find the right path.

2. Although jihad as a message of death deprives some people of earthly joys, is a panacea for the nation, and life for national and social order, ensurer of perpetuity, giving immortality to those who may die in place of this uncertain life. This is that philosophy of death which had distinguished the lives of the Muslims above other peoples that if he who holds high the banner of Islam succeeds, he is a ghazi, and if he dies, he is a martyr.

لَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ
لَا تَشْعُرُونَ (١)

(بقره ج ٢ ع ٣)

Call not them dead who are slain in the path of Allah, they live, but you do not know. (al Baqar)

For this reason, the promise for him who shirks is:

وَمَنْ يُولِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ذُبُرَهُ الدَّمْحَرَقًا لَقَتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَيِّزًا إِلَى فِئَةٍ فَقَدْ بَاءَ
بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ وَبئسَ الْمَصِيرُ (١)

(انفال ج ٩ ع ١٥)

And he who turns his back to them that day, unless maneuvering for battle or intending to join another (part of his) host his is laden with wrath from God and his abode shall be Geheuna, how wretched a destination. (Anfaal)

3. Islam declares bravery to be a noble value, and cowardice a despicable quality. The Prophet ﷺ, listing evil deeds, said that it is possible for them to be seen in a Muslim's life as error or stumbling, but cowardice cannot possibly go together with Islam. But let it be remembered that to oppress people with wrong show of strength is not bravery; bravery is to be steadfast on the path of truth and fearless in the face of falsehood.



HAZRAT ILYAS (Elijah) ﷺ

It has already been stated that the successors of Moses are not mentioned in the Qur'an by name. Joshua is referred to in two places, but as *fata* or companion of Moses, and in the other, in al Maidah as "one of two men," (the other being Caleb b. Euphena). Reference to Ezekiel is only in the course of a narration, not even as a description. The first prophet to be mentioned by name after Moses and Aaron is Ilyas, successor to Ezekiel. He is known as Elojah among the Israelis.

The Qur'an refers to him as Ilyas and in the Gospel of St. John, he is Ilyas. Some Traditions state that Ilyas and Idrees both are names of one prophet, but this is not correct. In the first place, Traditionists are critical of these Traditions and consider them as not worth discussing.¹ Besides, the Qur'anic style also contradicts these Traditions. There is not the slightest indication contained in the characteristics of Ilyas given in Surahs al An'am and al Saffa't to show he is also named Idrees. Nor is the account given of Idrees in Surah e al Anbiya in any way similar to that of Ilyas.

Moreover, Ilyas's genealogy as given by the chroniclers is quite different from that of Idrees. This means that there is a gap of centuries between the two. Had the two names been of the same prophet, the Qur'an would have indicated the fact and chroniclers would have explained the similarity with supporting arguments. Therefore, it is correct that Idrees is a prophet of the era between Noah and Abraham, while Ilyas is an Israeli prophet, coming sometime after Moses. Tabari says that he is the first cousin of Al-yasa, whose advent is after Ezekiel.

Descent —

Most historians agree that Ilyas is of Aaron's lineage, and his descent is:

Ilyas b. Yasin b. Phathas. b. Yazar b. Aaron; or Ilyas b. Aa'zar b. Ya'zar b. Aaron.

¹ al Bidaya wal Nihaya Vol. I pp. 237-239.

Ilyas in the Qur'an —

The Qur'an mentions Ilyas in two places: in Surah e al Ana'm and Surah e al Saffat. In al Ana'm he is merely included in the list of prophets, while in al Saffat he is described, though briefly, with his advent and guidance for his people.²

Advent -

Historians and commentators agree that he was sent for the guidance of the people of Syria and the famous city of Baalbak was the centre of his mission. The people here were devotees of the popular idol Ba'al. Allah's prophet showed them the light and gave them guidance. In place of star-worship and idolatry he called them to the Unity of the Divine Being.

Ba'al was the most well-known and popular of the gods of the Saami peoples in the east. The idol was a male and counterpart of Jupiter or Saturn. He was specially worshipped by Phoenician, Cannanites, Moabites and Midian tribes. Its worship was established for ages. Moabites and Midianies had been adoring it since the time of Moses. In Midian, the famous city of Baalbak was named after him. Some think that the famous idol Hubal of Hijaz was this very Ba'al.

Ba'al was so highly revered that because of the many varied munificent patronising endowments he was known by a variety of names. The Old Testament narrating his worship by Saami peoples mentions him also as Ba'al Bares and Ba'al Phafur. Among Aqroonis he is Beelzebub and Kaldanis pronounce his name as Beal, Beelus, and quite often also as Ba'al and Ba'loos.

In Sami and Hebrew languages, *Ba'al* means 'lord', 'owner', 'commander' and 'lord the bestower' and 'nourisher'. For this reason, Arabs call a 'husband' also 'baal'; but when the second 'a' is accented, the word denotes only an idol.

Among the Jews and Israelis of the eastern parts, great functions used to be held for Baal's worship according to the seasons, and for the purpose, magnificent sacrificial altars were erected. Priests burnt incense and many perfumes were offered, and sometimes human beings were also slaughtered in sacrifice.³

² Surah e al An'aam Verse 85/86; Surah al Saa'faat verses 131-143.

³ Muaarjif from Bastani Da'iratul.

It is written in the commentaries that this idol was made of gold, had four faces and stood twenty metres high, and had forty servants to attend on it.⁴

In Ilyas's time, Ba'al was the favourite idol of Yemen and Syria; and Ilyas's people worshipped him specially, though alongwith other idols.

وَإِنَّ إِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ () إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ () أَتَدْعُونَ بَعْلًا
وَتَذَرُونَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ () اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَاءِكُمْ الْأَوَّلِينَ ()
فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ () إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ () وَتَرَكْنَا
عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ () سَلَّمَ عَلَى آلِ يَاسِينَ () إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِينَ () إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ()

(الصافات ج ٢٣ ع ٨)

And lo! Elias was of those sent (warn). When he said unto his folk, Will ye not ward off (evil)? Will ye cry unto Ba'al and forsake the best of Creators, Allah, your Lord and Lord of your forefathers? But they denied him, so they surely will be haled forth (to the doom), save single-minded slaves of Allah. And We left for him among the later folk (the salutation): Peace be unto Elias! Lo! Thus do We reward the good. Lo! he is one of Our believing slaves!

(al Safaat : 123-132)

A point in commentary

The Verses in which Ilyas is mentioned in Surah e al An'am give a brief list of the Prophet descendants of Noah and Abraham:

كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا ۗ وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ
وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ () وَزَكَرِيَّا
وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ ۗ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ () وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ
وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا ۗ وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا

(انعام ج ٤ ع ١٦)

⁴ Rooh ul Ma'ani vol 23 p. 627

Each of them We guided, and Noah did We guide aforetime. and of his seed (We guided) David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the good. And Zacharia and John and Jesus and Elias; each one of them was of the righteous. And Ishmael and Elisha. Each one of them did We prefer above (Our) creatures.


(al An'am: 85-87)

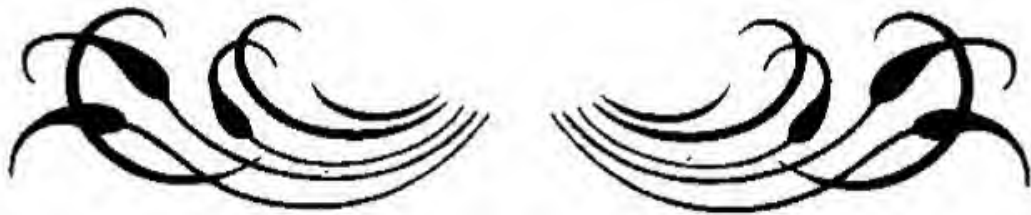
Here the Qur'an mentions the prophets in three separate clauses. Why? Most commentators have turned their attention to this. Of them, the best opinion is that of the author of al Manar, who holds that the reason is that there were three separate categories among the Hebrew prophets, according to their distinguishing calibre. Some of these prophets were kings and rulers or ministers and leaders; the lives of some of them were abstentious, purely saint-like, they detested wealth and led ascetic lives; like monks; and some were neither ascetic like monks nor kings and commanders, but simply, guides and message-bearers living on middle economy. The Qur'an, here, mentions them according to their particular times and some peculiar qualities and calibre. Then, their grades have been considered also. In the first are David and Solomon who, besides being prophets, were also kings; then Job and Joseph, who were not kings, but, of the two, Job ran a small estate, while the other, was a minister possessing full authority. Then follow the names of Moses and Aaron who were neither monarches nor state ministers nor owners of big or small estates but only prophets and leaders of their peoples. In another category are prophets who spent their entire lives as ascetics and never built a house for themselves to live in, nor made arrangements for their food and drink. They spent the whole day in missionary activities, and at night, after devotional prayers, slept with one arm under the head and wherever they found a place. Of these the most well-known and distinguished are John, Zachariah, Jesus and Elias or Ilyas.

Yet another list is of those prophets who were neither rulers nor leaders, nor altogether ascetics but living average lives, performed their missionary duties. Such were Ismail, Elisha, Jonah and Lot.

Lessons –

Although Ilyas is mentioned very briefly in the Qur'an, we do learn from his life that the mentality of the Jews was so depraved that there was no evil in the world to do which they did not emulate one another; no good which appealed to their hearts; and, in spite of a long procession of prophets who came to them, they constantly renegaded to adoration of images and the elements and stars. In short, there was nothing that they did not worship, except Allah.

Where, on the one hand, the Qur'an throws light on their wrong doings and unfortunate condition, at the same time we obtain the great lesson that now since the lineage of prophets has been finally terminated by the last message by the Qur'an and with the advent of the last Prophet , it is necessary for us that unlike the Children of Israel, we hold on to the commands of Allah and not dare act against them. Our way should be submission, not denial and deviation, because this alone is the meaning of Islam.



HAZRAT AL-YASA (Elisha) ﷺ

A Hebrew tradition of Wahab b. Munabbah tells us that his name is Al-Yasa and he is the son of Khutoob. Ibn Ishaq agrees with him. History books also tell us that he is Elijah's first cousin. Ibn Asakir writes in his history that Al-Yasa is descended from Joseph b. Jacob.

Al-Yasa b. Adi b. Shutam b. Ephraim b. Joseph b. Jacob b. Isaac b. Abraham. If Yas-i-ah of the Old Testament and Al-Yasa are the same person, then his father's name is Amos.

Advent --

Al-Yasa is Elijah's successor and caliph. In his childhood he lived with Elijah, after whose death he was endowed with prophethood for the guidance of Israeli people. He followed Elijah's way of missionary work. We do not know how long he lived or continued his missionary work among his people.

The Qur'an does not throw much light on him and mentions him only briefly in Surah al An'am and Sa'd:

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

(انعام ب ٧ ع ١٢)

And Ishmael and Elisha and Jona and Lot: each one of them did We prefer above (Our) creatures.

(al An'am : 87)

وَاذْكُرْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ وَكُلٌّ مِّنَ الْأَخْيَارِ (١)

(ص ج ٢٣ ع ١٣)

And make mention of Ishmael and Elisha and Dhul Kifl. All are of the chosen.

(Sa'd : 48)

Lesson -

It is proved by the lives of those prophets who were endowed with such status after they had lived in the company of greater and illustrious prophets and followed them, that the society of good people is a panacea for attaining goodness. As Rumi says:

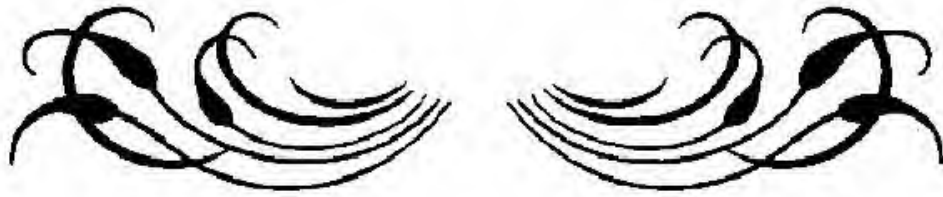
يك زمانه صحبتى با اولياء

بہتر از صد سال طاعت بی ریا

"Spending some time in the company of saints

Is better than a hundred years among evil-doers"

It is a great deprivation if devotional exercises continue even for thousands of years, yet one is deprived of the company of an accomplished saint. The want can be made up only by such company and nothing else.



HAZRAT SHAMVEL

(Umasel)

When the Children of Israel entered Palestine in the time of Joshua, by Allah's command he divided the country among them so that they might live there in peace and abide by the true religion. Joshua's Book, chapter 24, in the Old Testament mentions this in detail.

All his life Joshua reformed his people and looked after them and appointed judges to decide their mutual disputes, so that in future too they may follow this precedent.

This routine continued for about three hundred and fifty years after the death of Moses. Tribal and family leaders governed over them, judges decided the disputes while the prophet supervised over them, besides performing his missionary duties. Sometimes Allah would appoint a judge to be His prophet. Throughout this period, the Israelis never had a king nor one single ruler over them. For this reason, neighbouring nations used to attack them. Israelis making themselves targets of their attack.¹ Sometimes Amalekites, another, Philistines (Palestinians), and yet another time Midianites would come upon them. And even if the assailants were defeated, they would commit raids and loot the people. For a long time such conditions prevailed, once this side coming out victorious, next, the other.

Towards the end of the fourth century of the Christian calendar the Palestinian Ashad and Havalı tribes of Gaza made fierce attack on the Israelis, and having defeated them carried away the Tabernacle which contained the original Torah, robes and staves of Moses and Aaron, and the jar of manna. The Philistines placed the Tabernacle in their favourite temple Dagon, named after their biggest idol. Dagon was given a human face and the body of a fish, and it was enshrined in this temple. Najjar, the Egyptian says, that near Ramla town in Egypt there is still a habitation by the name of Bayt e Dagon. Probably, Dagon's temple mentioned in the Torah was located here, and the township was named after it.

Name and descent—

After the priest Eli's time, one of the judges by the name of Shamvel was endowed with prophethood, appointed to guide the Israelis.

¹ Judges Ch. 2 vs. 6, 7; Judges ch. 21 vs.25.

Some traditions state that after Elisha passed away, there arose among the Amalekites living between Egypt and Palestine a despot named Goliath who overcame the Israelis, occupied many of their towns and cities, and making their leaders and other respectable people captives, took them away with him and levied tribute on the rest of them. He also destroyed what was left of the Torah.

This was a very difficult period for the Israelis. There was no prophet among them nor a leader or ruler, and among the lineage of prophets there was only one expectant woman. But in these adverse conditions Allah had compassion on them and there was born to this woman a boy who was named Shamvel. The responsibility for bringing up this child was assumed by an elder of the Israelis. He helped Shamvel to memorise the Torah and pass through the various stages of religious learning. When Shamvel grew up to the age of maturity, he appeared distinguished above all others. Finally, Allah made him a prophet and appointed him to guide the Israeli people.²

Chroniclers say that Shamvel was of Aaron's lineage³. His family tree is as follows: Shamvel b. Hanna b. A'qir⁴ links above are not stated, but Makatal adds: Shamvel b. Ba'li b. A'quma b. Yargam b. Yahu b. Tahav b. Soof b. Aluma b. Ma'as b. Amoos b. Azaya.⁵ Shamvel or Shamveel is Hebrew translated in Arabic as Ismail, but long usage left it as Ashamveel or Shamveel.

When even in Shamvel's time, Goliath's tyranny did not abate, the Israelis appealed to Shamvel that he appoint a king over them, under whom they could defend themselves against the marauders and tyrants, and fighting in the path of Allah, finish the enemy's curse once for all. The Old Testament gives us the reason for the Israeli demand for a king.

"When Shamvel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. Yet his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside, after gain, they took bribes and perverted justice.

Rooh ul Ma'ani vol. 2 p142

Khazan vol. 2

⁴ Rooh ul Ma'ani, vol2, p. 142

⁵ Tarikh e Ibn Kathir: vol 2, p. 5

Then all the elders gathered together and came to Shamvel at Ramah, and said to him, 'Behold you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations.'

(Shamvel Ch. 8 vs. 24)

Further on, we are told that Shamvel did not like the demand for a king and he told the people that a king would make slaves of them all. But the Israelis persisted in their demand, until, finally, Shamvel turned to Allah and prayed, and appointed Saul of Benjamin's lineage as king. Saul was very handsome and well-built.

Imam Tha'ibi gives his genealogy as follows:

Saul b. Kish b. Abiel.b. Zeror b.Becorath b.Aphiah b. Anis, b.Benjamin b. Jacob b.Isaac b. Abraham.⁶

The Qur'an, however, gives a somewhat different reply of Shamvel which is very relevant to the Israeli temperament:

He said: "I am afraid that if a king is appointed over you and he commands you to fight against the enemy, you may lose courage and refuse to fight."

The Israelis replied very emphatically, "How can it be possible that we refuse to fight when we know too well, that the enemy has humiliated us so greatly and turned us out of our houses and made captives of our children."

After Shamvel exhausted his reasons, he turned to Allah, and Allah advised him that the request of the Israelis was granted, and that He had appointed Saul, who was in every way distinguished above them, to be their king. When the Israelis heard this, they expressed their disapproval, saying that man was not even a man of wealth; how could he possibly be their king; they had a proper right to kingship and some one from among themselves should be appointed king.

Chroniclers write that for a long time prophets came from the lineage of Levi, and rulers from that of Judah. So now when the rulership appeared to be transferred to the lineage of Benjamin they were jealous and could not tolerate the idea.

To accept a word in the beginning and refuse or reject it later on was characteristic of the Jews. Accordingly, they had thought that Shamvel's eyes would fall on one of them but when found that, contrary to expectation they had all been bye-passed, and an individual of a poor family, though he was learned and able-bodied, was appointed to this high position, flames of envy

overpowered them and they began to dispute. Shamvel said to the disputants and critics:

"I knew well from the beginning that your natural cowardice and low character would not let your momentary exuberance last long which would freeze when the time came. So you have started finding excuses. You should know that the standard of rulership you have in your minds, wealth, is absolutely false. For Allah, a ruler should possess wisdom, power of knowledge and personal physical strength because these two basics are necessary for strategy, correctness of thinking and courage and valour, and in these virtues, Saul excels you all.

The Qur'an says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذِ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّ
لَهُمْ أَوْعِثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ
عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ
أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَاؤُنَا فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
مِّنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ () وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ
طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ
بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِّنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكَهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ()

(بقره ج ٢ ع ١٦)

Bethink thee of the leaders of the Children of Israel after Moses, how they said unto a prophet whom they had: Set up for us a king and we will fight in Allah's way. He said, Would ye then refrain from fighting if fighting were prescribed for you? They said, why should we not fight in Allah's way when we have been driven from our dwellings with our children. Yet when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned away all save a few of them. Allah is aware of evildoers!

Their prophet said unto them, Lo! Allah hath raised up Saul to be a king over you. They said, How can have kingdom over us when we are more deserving of the

kingdom than he is, since he hath not been given wealth enough? He said, Lo! Allah hath chosen him above you and has increased him abundantly in wisdom and stature. Allah bestoweth His sovereignty on whom He wills. Allah is all embracing, All knowing!

(al Baqar : 246-247)

The prophet referred to in these verses is Shamvel.

The Tabernacle—

Israeli obstinacy went so far that they demanded of Shamvel that if Saul's appointment were from Allah, some token should be shown in support of him. Shamvel replied that if this were their demand, for the sake of finishing the argument, a token would be provided, namely, that the Tabernacle which was seized from them, and which contained the Torah and relics of Moses and Aaron would be returned to them because of Saul, and their eyes would see the angels bringing it down on earth for their possession:

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ (١٦ ع ٢)

And their prophet said unto them. Lo! the token of his kingdom is that there shall come unto you the Ark wherein is peace of reassurance from your Lord, and a remnant of that which the house of Moses and the house of Aaron left behind, the angels bearing it. Lo! herein shall be a token for you if (in truth) you are believers. (al Baqar : 248)

At last, these words of Shamvel, proved effective. The angels of Allah presented the Tabernacle to Saul. It was now evident to the Israelis that if they accepted the revealed verdict of Shamvel they would meet with assured and lasting triumph.

The style in which the Old Testament describes the return of the Tabernacle is very interesting. Briefly, that ever since the Tabernacle was placed in the temple at Dagon, the Palestinians saw everyday that when they came to worship their idol they found it lying on its face, and after they turned it right side up, at night again they found it lying on its face. Then, so many rats increased that they destroyed everything. Besides, an epidemic of unusual kind of tumors infected the people and caused a number of deaths. Palestinians now thought the cause of their woes was the curse of this Tabernacle-box and they

went to their priests and astrologers-requesting that something be done to relieve them of their woes. They proposed that the Tabernacle should be removed as soon as possible; that seven rats of gold should be made and seven tumors and in a cart along with the box; that the cart should be driven by two milt-cows, which should then be taken out of the city and left to take whichever direction they pleased.

The Palestinians did accordingly

The cows took the direction of the Israeli habitations and came to a stop in a field that was being cultivated by some Israelis. As they saw the Tabernacle they were overcome with joy and ran to the city of Bethshe-mesh to give its people the good news. After this the people of Kiriath-je-arimeth came and carried the Tabernacle with great reverence, where they placed it in Abin'adab's house which was built on a mound. *(Shamvel: Chs. 6 & 7)*

Abdul Wahab Najjar contends on the basis of this account that by the angels bringing the Tabernacle means that the angels would guide the cows in the right direction. But although this appears very appealing, the interpretation is not correct and the Qur'an denies it.

The Qur'an's purpose here is that the return of the Tabernacle was meant to be a token for Saul's kingship as advised by Shamvel and the angels brought down before their own eyes and presented it to Saul. But the Old Testament says that two cows brought the Tabernacle to Bethshe-mesh. They did not turn right or left but went straight down the road until coming to the fields of Bethshemeshi, the first Israeli habitation after the boundary line. It is also stated that some Philistines walked behind the cart and returned only after the cows came to a stop in the Israeli fields.

"And the cows went straight in the direction of Bethshe-mesh, along one highway, lowing as they went, they turned neither to the right nor to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them, as far as the border of Bethshe-mesh. Now the people of Bethshe-mesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley and when they lifted up their eyes and saw the Ark, they rejoiced to see it." *(1 Shamvel, ch.6 vs. 12)*

This method of delivering the Tabernacle is not miraculous nor a token seeing also that some priests of Dagon walked behind the cart. Moreover, the Qur'an would not use the strong expression: "*No doubt, there is in this a great portent for you.*"

Besides, anyone at all familiar with the Qur'an's style knows that if the Tabernacle were received accordingly as stated in the Bible, the Qur'an would not have described this in the words, "borne by the angels" but would have used some such words as "guided by angels."

Even if the Old Testament version is admitted as correct, it will be seen that everyday the Dagon idol was found lying on its face prostrate. This too is a miracle or portent which took place without any external means. So if this miracle is accepted, why should not it be believed that angels carried the Tabernacle before every eye to see.

Saul and Goliath:

the battle—

Israelis now had no alternative but submit to Shamvel's proposal to accept Saul as a king.

Saul proclaimed a general public order that the Israelis prepare themselves for battle with the Philistines. When they marched out under Saul for battle, he put them to a test before the engagement so that he purge his army of those elements who may lose heart at the crucial moment for even one man's cowardice or hypocrisy sometimes bring about disaster to the whole army. To find out who was sincere and who was not, Saul, on coming to a rivulet, ordered that no one should drink of its water to his fill, and whoso does it, would be turned out of Allah's group, and he who obeyed would be retained. However, in case of severe thirst, a mouthful or two was permissible. The idea was to see that if one could not control ordinary thirst and hunger could hardly be expected to remain steadfast in battle.

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ -
(بقره ج ٢ ع ١٧)

And when Talut set forth with his troops, he said, "God will put you to the test by a river, whoever, therefore, drinks from it shall not be of me, and who shall not taste it shall be of me except him who scoops up a handful in his hand". But they all drank of it except a few of them. (al Baqar)

Commentators explain that this incident took place at the river Jordan.

In a Tradition from Bar'a b. A'zib in Bukhari we are told that the Prophet ﷺ said that Saul's army was equal to that of the Muslim army at Badr.⁸

⁷ *al Bidaya wa al Nihaya vol2 p. 8*

⁸ *Bukhari ch. al-Moghazi*

When the army had crossed the river, those who had drunk water to their fill said that they did not possess sufficient strength to fight the might of Goliath. But those who controlled themselves and proved their obedience to their commander announced that they would certainly fight the enemy because it has been seen often enough that a small host defeated a much larger force on condition that they have faith in Allah and possess certainty. ---

فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ
وَجُنُودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلتَقُوا اللَّهَ كُمْ مِّنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ
غَلَبَتْ فِئَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ()

(بقره ج ۲ ع ۱۷)

And after he had crossed (the river), he and those who believed with him said, We have no power this day against Goliath and his hosts. But those who knew that they would meet their Lord, exclaimed: How many a little company hath overcome a mighty host by Allah's leave! Allah is with the steadfast.
(al Baqar : 249)

Saul's army small as it was advanced to confront Goliath who was a very tall and unusually well-built man and his force was also much large in number. Saul's men with sincere hearts prayed Allah that He defeat the enemy, keep them firm and make them triumphant.

The Old Testament and biography books state that the Israelis were greatly impressed by the unusual valour of Goliath and they hesitated answering his challenging calls.

David's valour :

Among Israelis there was a young man who possessed neither any distinguished personality nor fame or courage and valour. He was the youngest of his brothers and had come to engage in fighting, but had been sent by his father to report on his brothers and the other Israelis. But when he saw the Goliath's challenges were not being responded, and the Israelis hesitating, he could not restrain himself and requested Saul to send him forward. But Saul told him that he was too young and inexperienced and would not be able to fight Goliath. But David kept insisting until at last, Saul had to give in. David went forward and challenged Goliath but Goliath seeing a youth confronting him took little notice of him but when challenging words were exchanged repeatedly, Goliath was impressed by the great prowess of the youth. David exchanged blows and taking his catapult and shot three stones at

Goliath's forehead splitting it into pieces. As Goliath fell, David stepped up and severed the man's neck from his body.

Immediately the balance of war tilted to the Israelis. The evil forces were totally defeated and the Israelis returned home triumphant. David's valour was imprinted on enemy and friend alike, and he became everybody's favourite. His personality now became prominent and distinguished.

Although the Qur'an looking on these details as superfluous does not record them, or perhaps, they are not true, the Qur'an and the Old Testament are agreed that Goliath was slain by David and Israelis were victorious, the enemy defeated because of Goliath being slain.

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ
أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ () فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ
دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ

(بقره ج ٢ ع ١٧)

And when they went into the field, against Goliath and his hosts, they said, Our Lord! Bestow on us endurance, make our foothold sure and give us help against the disbelieving folk! So they routed them by Allah's leave and Allah slew Goliath; and Allah gave him the kingdom and wisdom and taught him of that which He willeth. (al Baqar : 250)

It is also narrated in Hebrew books that seeing Goliath's stature and the Israelis hesitating, Saul announced that he would have his daughter in marriage to whoever slew Goliath and also make him partner in his kingdom. So when David slew Goliath, Saul gave David his daughter Michal to wed.⁹

Evaluation of a Hebrew narrative:

In Book Shamvel of the Old Testament, there is a long narrative regarding Saul and David, which is briefly stated here, that although Saul gave David his daughter to wed, he did look with a kindly eye on David's tremendous bravery and his popularity among the Israelis. He was envious but kept his ill-feeling hidden and secretly kept doing things to get rid of him.

⁹ Book Samuel, al Bidaya wa al Nihaya vol. 2, pp. 8, 9

But Saul's daughter and son sympathised with David and remained his confidants on account of which Saul could not succeed against him. At last, Saul came out in open hostility which obliged David to escape with his wife and brother-in-law to a town of the Philistines and took asylum with one of Saul's enemies. The Philistines took advantage of this mutual wrangling of the Israelis, attacked them and caused them great disgrace and loss.

There is some difference between Suddi's version and that of the Old Testament. The Old Testament says that Saul was killed in this battle while Suddi says that Saul, seeing his defeat, regretted what he had done and asked the priests and elders whether there was any chance of his repentance being accepted. They told him unanimously that there was none. But a virtuous woman said that there was and she took him to Elisha's tomb and prayed. Elisha rose up from his grave and told Saul that there was one way for him, namely, that he abdicate and hand over the government to David, and then together with all his family fight in the path of Allah and be martyred. Saul did as he was told. He and his family were martyred and in this way David became sole and undisputed monarch.

This entire story is from Book Shamvel but Muslim biographers, referring to Suddi, have narrated it as of Islamic origin even so far as to quote it in the commentary on the Qur'an's references to David. We do not know why there was such a great vogue in the past to be careless about including in Islamics those stories which the Jews had fabricated to support their erring ways. Not only the commentaries and history, even so inviolable a document as the Qur'an was not left safe from such carelessness.

You will recall that when Shamvel proposed Saul's name for appointment as king, as the Qur'an tells us, the people objected but when a portent from Allah convinced them, they accepted him to be their ruler. The Jewish religious leaders kept smarting under the feeling that to their numerous perversities was added their rejection of Saul who was proposed by Allah to be their king therefore, now they should create a situation which would prove that they were, after all, right in what by they had gauged by their own intelligence and, ultimately Saul's incompetence was proved. To reduce the gravity of the crime and cover up their own perverse temperament, this is what comes to the surface in Shamvel Book' narrative of David and Saul.

But it is a pity that some biographers and commentary writers, without considering this, out of their simplicity copied it in their works. They did not even consider that the personage whom the Qur'an describes as appointed by Allah, by whose grace the Tabernacle was returned to the Israelis, is described in such glorious words *زَادَهُ، بَسْطَةَ فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ* and appreciates his valour and wisdom, they are submitting to severe censure by ascribing such misdeeds.

It is unlike the Qur'an to speak of one's audable qualities but throw no light on one's sins and crimes committed for a great part of life. Therefore, since the Qur'an does not have a word against Saul, not even the slightest indication of it, how can it be permissible for a Muslim to endorse such a perverse story of the Torah.

For this reason, Ibn Kathir, after quoting this narrative, remarks:

وفى بعض هذا نظرٌ ونكارةٌ

"Some parts of this narrative are superficial and objectionable,"

Further, he also says that the reference to a woman going to Elisha's tomb and waking him up from death, is itself proof of its incorrectness. Such miracles are performed only sometimes and only by prophets, not by any woman, however pious or devout she may be. (*al Bidaya wal Nihaya* p. 9)

This is the reason why Ibn Kathir attaches no value to this narrative.

During this time Shamvel passed away.

Lessons—

There are many lessons to be learnt from the lives of Shamvel and Saul, but here we can only quote a few:

1. Allah has made it natural for every nation that when its liberty is in danger of being usurped by a tyrant to enslave them, it seeks to prevent such enslavement and renouncing its divisions, it looks for some one capable of guiding it out of its predicament and taking it up to noble heights. It was this natural urge that made the Israelis demand of Shamvel that he appoint a king over them.
2. This consciousness of freedom and preservation of rights is found first among special individuals and then gradually seeps down to the masses. The more such individuals are among a people the more rapidly will emotional urges sweep across the masses.
3. When the ability to defend one's security against an enemy is firmly rooted among the elite of a nation, it does not remain without impressing the masses and the weak who begin to think that their national emotions and sense of honour are no less than those of the others; but when it comes to putting these thoughts into practice, they find no one except the very sincere capable of it. This is what the Qur'an implies in these words;

فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ()

But when fighting was made obligatory on them (the Israelis), all save a few turned their backs Allah is best aware of the wrongdoers.

4. One fatal belief among the ignorant customs of nations and communities has been that the right to rule and govern belongs only to one who is wealthy and highborn and occupies a prominent position in capitalism. This belief is so common that even those nations which have been in the forefront by way of civilization, culture, and the arts and sciences are equally victims of it, even far more adherents of it than the former ages of ignorance. On its basis the Children of Israel objected to Saul rule over them.

وَلَمْ يُؤْتِ سَعَةً مِّنَ الْمَالِ ۗ وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ

He has not been given any great wealth, and we have more right to govern.

5. As opposed to this foolish notion, Islam declared that with Allah leadership and government are not connected with wealth, nor with birth, but knowledge and strength. Justice and rights, balanced opinion, council and contriving, which are the basic conditions of governance do not arise out of wealth and high birth, but their fountain spring is knowledge and wisdom. Similarly, courage, physical and moral, are indispensable to leadership and government. *Bastatun fil jism* does not mean eating well and getting muscular, but that strength and power, the power of self-defence and that which strike terror on field of battle, together with dignity and moral courage.

The Qur'an also tells us that the subject of the privilege of rulership is a special one of religion, and among communities and nations has repeatedly been referred to the prophets during their periods of ignorance. So that whenever the peoples make serious mistakes, they may be warned and corrected by reference to the prophets or their vicegerents. Thus, when the Israelis objected to Saul, presenting Shamvel wrong arguments, he advised them with the correct position:

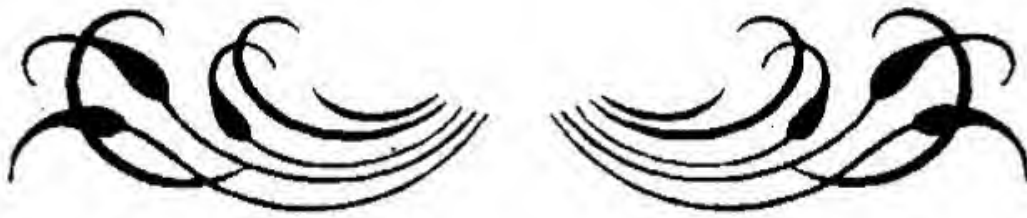
إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ ۗ

Verily Allah hath given Saul preference above you and blessed him with knowledge and physical strength.

6. Whenever there is a tussle between truth and falsehood, the sincere, enthused with sacrificial emotions step forward for the cause of truth and trust in Allah; success and victory no longer depend on numbers, small or great; but the smaller often triumph over the greater, as the Qur'an says:

كَمْ مِنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً، بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ (بقره ج ٢ ع ١٧)

How often has a small company been victorious against a larger host! (al Baqar)



HAZRAT DAUD (David) ﷺ

In the last chapter, some brief references were made to Daud, particularly, that the valour he showed in slaying Goliath made a deep impression on the Israelis filling their hearts with respect and affection for him, and he had become the most distinguished personality.

Not long after, this very Daud was appointed a prophet for guidance of the Children of Israel and *Caliph* for administration of their civic affairs:

In his chronicles, Ibn Kathir has given Daud's genealogy as follows:

Daud b. Jesse b. Ubad b. Abir (Abiz) b. Salmoon b. Nahshoon b. Uniazab b. Jacob b. Isaac b. Abraham. These names have been taken from Ibn Jarir. Imam Tha'ibi, in *Arais ul Bayan* has given other names but all agree that Daud was of the tribe of Judah.¹

The Old Testament tells us that Jesse had many sons of whom Daud was the youngest.²

Borrowing from Wahab b. Munabbah, Muhammad ibn. Ishaq describes Daud as being short statured with blue eyes, sparse of hair on the body and a face bespeaking purity of heart and temperament.³

Daud is mentioned in the Qur'an in Surah al Baqar, al Maaidah, al An'aam, al Asra, al Anbiya, al Namal, Saba and Sa'd; sixteen times in all. The following table may be of interest:

<i>SURAH</i>	<i>VERSE</i>	<i>No. of Times</i>
al Baqar	102, 251	2
al Nisa	162	1
al Ma'idah	79	1
al An'aam	84-90	7
al Asra	55	1
al Anbiya	78-82	5

¹ Tarikh e Ibn Kathir vol. 2. p. 9.

² Book of Samuel

³ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya vol. 2. p. 10.

al Namal	15-44	29
Saba	10, 14	2
Sa'd	17-26, 30-40	19
	Total	67

The result of the increasing affection the Children of Israel cherished for him was that in Saul's own lifetime or soon after his death, the reins of government passed into Daud's hands. Not much later, Allah rewarded him further by appointing him as His prophet.

Until now the tradition among the Israelis had been that government vested in the hands of one tribe, the clan of Ephraim, while prophets, nabi and rasool, came from another, that of Judah.⁴ Daud was the first in whom Allah vested both prophethood and rulership as king. As the Qur'an says:

اتُه اللهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ

(بقره ج ٢ ع ١٧)

And Allah gave him the kingdom and wisdom and taught him of that which He willeth. (Al Baqar 2.51)

يَدْوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ (ص)

O Daud! We verily appointed thee as Our viceroy --Caliph-- on the earth. (Sa'd)

وَكُلًّا آتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا (انبياء)

And We bestowed on each of them (Daud and Suleman) kingdom and knowledge. (Al Anbiya)

Daud is the only prophet, besides Adam, whom the Qur'an refers to as Caliph. After due consideration there seem to be two reasons for this distinction: one, that we shall give in its proper place in the next pages; the other, that since prophethood and rulership had for centuries been vested separately in two individuals, and now, contrary to tradition, they were embodied in one person, it was necessary that a title should be given to him to denote that he had been made an incumbent of both duties, expressing in himself the Divine virtues of

⁴ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya vol. 2, p. 10.

knowledge and power. For this, in *Shariah* terminology, there could be no better word than *caliph*.

Thus Daud performed the twin duties of guiding the Israelis as well as supervising their collective social life. The Qur'an, the Old Testament and Hebrew chronicles bear witness that considering his valour, power of intelligence and soundness of judgment, Daud was a perfect human being. Victory was always at his feet. Allah's munificence was so greatly with him that howsoever small his group might be in comparison with the enemy's, triumph was always his. For this reason within a short time, Syria, Iraq, Palestine and east Jordan came under his rule. The entire region from the Gulf of Aqaba, across Damascus, to the Euphrates was his domain. And if those parts of the Hijaz are to be taken into account which had fallen to him, it will not be an exaggeration to say that Daud's kingdom was, as modern historians tell us, larger than that of the Arab mainland, or any Samaritan region, and it was not shared with anyone.

Added to this was that Daud was the recipient of Divine inspiration, and this raised his stature and awe in every eye.

The people believed that howsoever difficult a matter for resolution, howsoever complicated, or made such by fraud and lies, if it were placed before him, the truth would manifest itself to him through inspiration. Therefore, none ever dared disobey his orders.

Quoting a Tradition from Abdullah b. Abbas, Ibn Jarir tells us that once two men came to Daud, each claiming that a certain bullock belonged to him. Daud postponed his verdict for the next day, when he told one of the claimants that Allah had revealed that the man should be executed. The man said, "True prophet of Allah! As far as my case is concerned, I have spoken the truth, but I did murder this (other) man's father." Daud, then, awarded him capital punishment.⁵

Such incidents occurred frequently, impressing all with Daud's awe and making everyone submissive to him. The Qur'an endorses the greatness of Daud's kingdom, his aweinspiring wisdom and his being a prophet:

وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهُ، وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصَّلَ الْخِطَابِ (ص)

And We made his kingdom strong and endowed him with wisdom (hikma) and the ability to pronounce right judgment.
(Sa'd)

⁵ Tarikh e Ibn Kathir vol. 2, p. 12.

Now, what is the meaning of *hikma* in this and preceding Verses? This question has long been under discussion among the scholars. We believe that the gist of their conclusions is that *hikma* here implies prophethood, and, second, that stage of wisdom and intelligence achieving which one cannot possibly go astray. Some scholars take the Psalms to be implied by *hikma*. Similarly, they take *Fasl e Kitab* to imply that Daud was gifted with excellent eloquence, every word of speech distinct and easily understood, making his language both pleasant and powerful.

Secondly, that his command or verdict was decisive.

Zaboor or Psalms—

The basic law for guidance of the Children of Israel was the Torah, but in consideration of the changed conditions, Daud was endowed with the Psalms so that while remaining within the rules and principles of the Torah, their guidance might be further reinforced. Daud revived Mosaic law, showed the right path, and, blessed with Divine inspiration, quenches those thirsty for personal acquaintance with the Divine Being, *moa'rafah*.

The Psalms are full of praises for the Divine Being, Who had also blessed Daud with such a magical voice and modulations that when he recited the hymns, not only human beings and jinn but also birds and beasts were entranced. Daud's voice is proverbial to this day. Abdul Razzaq says that when the Prophet ﷺ used to hear Abu Musa Ash'ari's voice, he would say that Allah had endowed Abu Musa with *Jahn e Daudi*, Daud's voice.⁶

The lexicon meaning of Zaboor is "pieces". As the Psalms were revealed to complete the Torah, they are its part and piece.

The Psalms were a collection of hymns, teaching worship, counsels, vision and wisdom. Ahmed's Masnad tells us that the Psalms were revealed in the month of Ramazan and were a collection of sermons and wisdom.⁷ There were also prophecies and good tidings. The good tidings in the Psalms as indicated in the following Verse of the Qur'an are about the advent of the Prophet ﷺ:

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ
الصَّالِحُونَ
(انبیاء)

⁶ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya vol. 2, p. 11.

⁷ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya vol. 2, p. 12.

And after the Reminder, We declared in the Psalms that Our faithful servants shall inherit the earth. (Al Anmbiya)

The Qur'an has in several places described the Torah, the Injeel and the Zaboor (Psalms) as from Divine inspiration, come down from Allah, and, side by side, has also said that the Jews altered and interpolated these Scriptures, so far that it is now difficult, even impossible, to distinguish between the genuine and the spurious texts.

مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِ (بقره)

Of the Jews there are some who alter the words (of the Scriptures) and the real spirit of them. (al-Baqar)

Besides the Torah and Injeel, the Psalms are a living testimony of this fact. The number of those parts of the Psalms which in the language of the people of the Scripture are said to be 'recorded', is one-hundred-and-fifty. The names given to these parts show that all of them have not been written by Daud. If Daud's name is given with some, the name of the choirmaster, or maestro of the songsters, Korah, is given on others, Asaph on the titlehead, Shushan, on others, Gittith on yet others, and no name on several others. And there are recordings which were made several centuries after Daud. For example:

*"O God, the heathen have come into thine inheritance; they have defiled thy holy temple: they have laid Jerusalem in ruins."*⁸

These words refer to that terrible event which overtook the Jews at the hands of Nabuchednasar centuries after Daud.

However, Allah brought down the Psalms on Daud, and through him conveyed to the Israelis the message of guidance and right counsel.

وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيِّنَ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا (اسراء)

And We preferred some of Our prophets above others. And gave the Psalms to Daud. (al Asra)

وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا (نساء)

And We bestowed the Psalms on Daud. (al Nisa)

⁸ Mazboor 79-84

There is a Tradition in Bukhari's Kitab ul Anbiyah that Daud could recite the whole of the Psalms in so brief a time that when he began harnessing his horse he would begin them and conclude them by the time he completed the harnessing.

Daud, the Qur'an and Torah –

At this point there is a great difference between the Qur'an and the Torah. The Qur'an looks upon Daud as a king of great power as well as a prophet and messenger, but the Torah regards him only as king, not admitting his being prophet or bearer of Divine message. Evidently the Torah's denial is meaningless, based on the kind of falsehood referred to many times in these pages.

Characteristics of Daud –

All prophets have been endowed with special honour and distinction and blessed them with countless blessings, but Allah has also given preferment to some above others showing degrees of ranks among them, which distinguish them accordingly.

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ م (بقره ج ٣ ع ١)

Of these messengers some of whom We have caused to excel others....." (al Baqar : 253)

Accordingly, the Qur'an has mentioned a number of distinguishing characteristics about Daud also, telling us how far Allah had endowed him with greatness. But it should be noted that this does not mean that others may not possess the same characteristics at all, and they are to be found only in one person. All it means is that the particular characteristic is perfected in that person, so that the very mention of it draws the attention to him, although the same characteristic may be visible in other prophets also.

Recitation, hills and birds –

Daud used to be very occupied with exalting and glorifying the Lord and was endowed with such a magnificent voice that when he recited the Psalms or praises of Allah, not only human beings but also birds and beasts would entrance and gather around him to accompany him in chorus, and the hills would resound and echo with Divine glorification .

وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ وَكُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ (١)

(انبياء ج ١٧ ع ٦)

And We subdued the hills and the birds to hymn (Our) praises alongwith Daud. And We were the doers thereof.

(al Anmbiya : 79)

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا يُجِبَالُ أُوْبِي مَعَهُ، وَالطَّيْرُ

(سبا ج ٢٢ ع ٢)

And assuredly We gave Daud grace from Us (saying) O! ye hills and birds echo his Psalms of praise.

(Saba 10)

إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ، يُسَبِّحُنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ () وَالطَّيْرُ

مَخْشُورَةٌ كُلُّ لَّهُ، أَوَّابٌ ()

(ص ج ٢٣ ع ٢٠)

Lo! We subdued the hills to hymn the praises (of their Lord) with him at nightfall and sunrise. And birds assembled; all were turning unto Him.

(Sa'd : 18,19)

Interpreting these Verses some commentators have said that the hymns by birds and hills were inherent in their nature; that is, everything of the universe, its make and every particle bears witness to its Maker, and this is its hymn and recitation.

An apple, for instance, cannot speak, but its aroma and delicious taste, its appearance and crispness call aloud, so to speak,

فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ()

"Allah! Thou art indeed the Blessed, the best of creators".

This is what Imam Razi also believes, but such philosophic argument is weak. Indeed, to call it an 'argument' at all is wrong.⁹

We should never forget the fact that the Qur'an is not subject to such philosophical hair-splitting, based, as it is, on mere whim and conjecture. The Qur'an, specially does not tolerate that its simple and clear meaning should be adapted to Greek philosophy.

To the contrary, scholars hold the opinion that all fauna and flora hymn the praises of their Lord, and such glorification is not confined to mere proving their Creator by the sole fact of their existence, and this alone comprises their praises. The Qur'an in Surah Israel very clearly announces:

⁹ Vide Tafsir e Kabir: Vol, 5: Surah Bani Israil.

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا
يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ
(ج ١٥ ع ٥)

The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein praise, and there is not a thing therein but hymneth His praises, but ye understand not their praise. (Verse 44)

Here, two points are very clear: 1. that everything in the universe praises; 2. that jinn and human beings do not possess the understanding of these praises.

Now, since Allah Himself has attributed to everything of fauna and flora and all besides that they praise Him, it is necessary that the reality of praise be present in everything. Then, attached to it are the words that jinn and humans cannot understand such praise. If the real meaning of "praise" is not taken here, and, instead, "praise by virtue of being in existence", how can the words of the Qur'an, "You do not understand their praise," be correct? *La tafqahuna tasbiha-hum.*

Although agnostics do not understand that every particle of the universe indicates the existence of the One Allah, every single follower of a religion, specially a Muslim, appreciates this fact. Whenever he thinks of the Creator's existence, he is certain that the smallest particle of the universe acknowledges His Being; the being of a thing is itself indicative of the Creator of the universe.

Ibn Hazm in Al Fasl says that if praises by animal life and flora and inorganic matter comprise real or basic praise, it will have to be admitted that an atheist who is after all a "thing", never for a moment praises the Lord Allah. Therefore, how can the usually taken sense of the Verse be retained?

Ibn Hazm's thinking on this point is very superficial. It seems that he forgot the implication that is contained here, in the Qur'an, and he did not reflect on the context of the Verse under consideration.

Before this Verse, the Qur'an, speaking of the polytheists, tells the Muslims that polytheists, because of their lack of intelligence and crooked thinking, ascribe associates to Allah. And when the Qur'an clarifies in a number of ways that this is false belief, the effect on them is more adverse, and their hatred increases further, although it is a manifest truth that Allah the Holy One transcends all false relations which the polytheists attribute to Him.

After this, the Qur'an goes on to explain that it is only man who is involved in polytheistic wanderings, otherwise everything else, the seven heavens, the earth and the rest of the universe praises the sacredness of its Maker and

repudiates *shyrk*, (associating partners with Him), although human beings may not understand those praises. Without doubt Allah is Wise and Forgiving!

Thereafter, the Qur'an, speaking of the consequences of false belief, that when the Prophet ﷺ recites the Qur'an, Allah places a veil between him and them. In other words, when they do not accept the Qur'an as the word of Allah, they do not also acknowledge him to be Allah's prophet, with the result that they become indifferent to the consequences of the Day of Judgment.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَكَّرُوا وَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا () قُلْ
 لَوْ كَانَ مَعَهُ آلِهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذًا لَأَبْتَغُوا إِلَىٰ ذِي الْعَرْشِ سَبِيلًا ()
 سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُقُولُونَ عَلُوًّا كَبِيرًا () تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمٰوٰتُ
 السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ
 لَّا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا () وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ
 جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُورًا ()

(بنی اسرائیل ج ۱۵ ع ۵)

We verily have displayed Our warnings in this Qur'an that they may take heed, but it increaseth them in naught but aversion.

Say (O! Muhammed to the disbelievers), If there were other gods alongwith Him, as they say, then had they sought a way against the Lord of the Throne.

Glorified is He, and High Exalted above what they say.

The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein praise Him, not a thing but hymneth His praises, but ye understand not their praise. Lo! He is ever Clement Forgiving!
 (Bani Israel : 41-44)

There is no room left for Ibn Hazm's doubt after these very clear words of the Qur'an telling us that the audacity to attribute partners with Allah can be that of human beings only because they are embodiments of contradictions; but with their exception, nothing in the universe can dare say anything before Allah but the truth. It can say nothing but speak of holiness; hymning His praises is its occupation by nature.

Shaykh Badruddin Aini gives a concise but well-reasoned out statement on this subject. He quotes the Prophet ﷺ who split a green branch of a tree in two

pieces and placed one each on two graves, saying, "Until these twigs dry up, the two occupants will remain secure against punishment".

The Shaykh says:

Knowledgeable scholars explain the meaning of the Verse:

آية وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ

"There is not a thing but hymneth His praises"

to be that every living thing hymns Allah's praises; and everything possesses life according to its grade. Wood (flora) has life as long as it is green and dryness is its death. A stone (inorganic matter) is live as long as it is in one piece, and breaking up is its death. Confirmed scholars hold to this principle that a Verse is secure (without interpretation). But there are differences of opinion whether things really hymn out praises or the mere fact of their existence itself comprises their praise. Confirmed scholars believe that things indeed do hymn the praises, and since intelligence too does not contradict the belief and Qur'anic injunction too is definitive, that meaning will have to be adopted which the research scholars state.¹⁰

The Qur'anic injunction is before us, but the answer to why human intelligence does not look upon it as impossible should be sought from human intelligence.

Secular philosophers are agreed that voice is not indispensable to belief and speech, and if life and voice or sound, both are present in a thing, it is unnecessary to think whether it can speak. Greek philosophers have always acknowledged the presence of sensibility of parts along with life in living creatures. Contemporary science is revealing that life and sense, both are present in flora. Experiments have been made to that effect. There's a tree which withers by being touched by hand, and blooms once the hand is withdrawn. Man-eating trees spread out their branches on the approach of a human being and grasp him. These are daily proven facts. There is a well-known botanical garden in Calcutta where a Mr. Bose displays the wonders of Allah the Almighty: that trees are diseased and some are healthy; and some trees hate other trees and some are favourably inclined to other trees. Some scientists claim today that a weak sort of life, almost insensitive, is to be found in inorganic matter also, which ensures its growth.

In short, the words of the Qur'an that everything in the universe hymns the praises of Allah have a literal meaning and it is useless to interpret them to

¹⁰ Aini: Sharah e Bukhari Vol. 1, p.874

mean that the praise is self evident by virtue of its mere being. But the understanding of such praise is beyond human beings, though prophets, by Allah's permission and His will are sometimes endowed by the understanding of it, as a token or miracle. Thus it was a distinguishing virtue of Daud that whenever he hymned the praises of Allah and glorified his sanctity, birds and beasts and hills joined in the chorus in loud acclaim. Both they and Daud would hear one another. This is clearly stated in Surahs al Anmbiyah, Saba and Sa'd of the Qur'an.

It should be noted that the ulema who believe on the basis of the verses of Surah Bani Israel that praises of the Divine are self evident in the very being of things, unhesitatingly admit that Daud's peculiar virtue belongs to the sphere of miracles, and in such context the praises of fauna and inorganic matter have a literal connotation, just as the miracles of the Prophet ﷺ are, such as stone pebbles reciting the *kalima*, the wailing of henna and animals conversing with him.

Iron softening in Daud's hands-

Although Daud was king, in fact, emperor, he never took anything from the state revenues for his personal or family expenses, meeting them by his own legitimate earning with the sweat of his brow. A Tradition is in appreciation of this fact:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا أَكَلَ أَحَدٌ طَعَامًا قَطُّ
خَيْرًا مِنْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ مِنْ عَمَلِ يَدِهِ وَإِنْ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ
كَانَ يَأْكُلُ مِنْ عَمَلِ يَدِهِ - (بخاری کتاب التجارة)

Said the Prophet ﷺ: 'The best food a man eats is of the earning of his own hands. Allah's prophet Daud, on whom be peace, (though king) earned his living by his own personal effort.'

Shaykh Badruddin Aini says that Daud used to pray, "Allah! Make it easy for me to earn my daily bread with my own hands because I do not wish to be a burden on the public revenues (*bayt ul maal*)."

This sacred desire of the prophet and king, Daud, was, as the Qur'an says, common to all prophets. When a prophet announces Allah's message, he, at the same time, tells the people:¹¹

¹¹ Aini: Vol. 7, p. 420

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ

"For my service I ask no wage from you; my compensation is with Allah."

Hafiz Ibn Hajar says that the Tradition implies that although it is permissible for a caliph to take from the state revenue just enough for his personal expenses, it is better not to do so and be the slightest burden on the public treasury. Caliph Abu Bakr, at the time of his death, returned to the state treasury whatever stipend he had taken from it during his caliphate tenure. This principle also applies to other services done for Islam.¹² Therefore, Allah accepted Daud's wish, exalting him by making iron supple as wax in his hands. So whenever he made coats of mail he could without any tools or hard effort mould the iron as he wished, as if it were wax, the iron taking any shape as required.

The Qur'an:

وَأَلْنَا لَهُ الْحَدِيدَ () أَنْ أَعْمَلَ سَابِغَاتٍ وَقَدْرِفَى السَّرْدِ وَأَعْمَلُوا
صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ()
(سبا ج ٢٢ ع ٢)

And We made the iron supple unto him, saying, Make thou long coats of mail and measure the links (thereof) And do ye right. Lo! I am seer of what ye do. (Saba 10-11)

وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوسٍ لَكُمْ لِتُحْصِنَكُمْ مِنْ بَأْسِكُمْ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ
شَاكِرُونَ ()
(انبیاء ج ٢٢ ع ٢)

*And We taught him the art of making garments (of mail) to protect you in your daring. Are ye then thankful?
(al Anmbiya 80)*

It appears from the history of iron and the period of the Torah that before Daud's time the use of this metal had advanced so far that it could be melted and made into small pieces which were joined together to make armour. But such coats of mail were too heavy and except for some rare stalwarts, its use was difficult obstructing swift movement on battlefield.

¹² Fatch al-Bari Vol, 4 p. 243

Daud was the first man who was blessed by inspiration to invent mail made of thin links of chain. It was light and wearing it soldiers could move about with nimbleness, giving greater protection against the enemy.

Syed Mahmood Aaloosi has quoted a Tradition from Qatada to this effect.¹³

Birds.... The Speech—

Daud and his son Suleman were blessed by Allah with the faculty of understanding the language of birds. They understood their language just as human beings understand the language of one another.

What is the truth about bird-language? And what kind of understanding did Daud and Suleman have about it? A detailed discussion will follow in the chapter on *Suleman*. Suffice it here that this knowledge was not of the kind which zoologists have invented by conjecture, and is looked upon as a branch of zoology. It was a gift of Allah endowed to these two prophets.

Recitation of the Psalms:

As mentioned earlier, Daud would recite whole the Psalms within the course of saddling his horse. This miracle of Daud relates to the "motion of tongue". Thus Allah would shrivel the time span which would otherwise have spread over the hours. In other words, Daud was bestowed with so much puissance of fluency of speech that the composition which an ordinary man could complete in hours, Daud would complete it within no time, as is described in a Tradition of Bukhari. The science has proved this fact that speed has no limit.

Two Important Occasions:

There are two important occasions in Daud's life which are reckoned as vital not only with regard to their facts but also as a subject of deliberations of the interpreters. The first is not controversial but the second one has become highly debatable and the interpretation of so called men of knowledge has entirely changed its implication. Therefore, it is expedient to disclose the truth and to discard the spurious views in the light of logical reasoning.

The First Occasion:

وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَسَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ
 وَكُنَّا لِحُكْمِهِمْ شَاهِدِينَ () فَفَهَّمْنَا هَا سُلَيْمَانَ ۖ وَكُلًّا آتَيْنَا حُكْمًا
 وَعِلْمًا - (انبيا ج ١٧ ع ٦)

¹³ Rooh ul Ma'ani: vol. 17, p. 71

And remember David and Suleman when they exercised their respective judgements concerning the crop when the sheep of certain people strayed therein by night; and We were witness to their judgement.

We gave Suleman the right understanding of the matter and to each of them gave We wisdom and knowledge.

(Al-Anmbiya 79-80)

While interpreting these verses, the interpreters have referred to an incident quoted by Abdullah b. Masood and Abdullah b. Abbas. Once it happened that two men came to Daud with a litigation. The complainant narrated that the goats of the defendant had ravaged his crop.

Daud, announcing the decision on the basis of his wisdom and knowledge, declared that since the value of the flock of the goat was almost equivalent to the loss accrued, therefore, whole the flock be given to the complainant. Suleman, who was only eleven years of age, was sitting beside his father. On hearing this decision he said to his father, "Though your decision is just but it would be more appropriate that the flock be handed over to the complainant so that he may enjoy the benefits of their milk and wool; and the defendant be asked to resuscitate the field in the meantime, and when the produce of it is revived, it be restored to its actual owner (the complainant) and the defendant gets back his flock." Daud heard this and appreciated the decision of his son.

The Qur'an too gives a hint that Suleman's proposal was the better one. Suleman, so to say, gets the credit for it.¹⁴ In *fiqh* terminology, Daud's verdict will be called an opinion and Suleman's *istahsani*, better by comparison. But this fragmentary improvement does not mean that considering the total virtues, Suleman was superior to his father Daud. The laudation with which Allah has spoken of the many virtues of Daud is not shared by Suleman.

The Second Occasion:

It is one of the more significant features of the Torah and Hebrew narratives that they attribute such ridiculous and baseless things to such great personages as prophets that reading them, far from looking upon them as such, it is difficult to think of them even as respectable worthies.

An Example of Slander:

As an example we may quote a story concerning Daud in Chapter Samuel 2 of Torah there is a lengthy one which may be better read in the original translation.

¹⁴ Ibn Kathir Surah e Anmbiya.

"In the spring of the year the time when kings go forth to battle, Daud sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But Daud remained in Jerusalem."

"It happened, late one afternoon, when Daud arose from his couch and was walking upon the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And Daud sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite?"

"So Daud sent messengers, and took her and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her uncleanness). Then she returned to her house. And the woman conceived; and she sent and told Daud, 'I am with child'.

"So Daud sent word to Joab, send me Uriah the Hittite; and Joab sent Uriah to Daud. When Uriah came to him, Daud asked how Joab was doing, and how the people fared, and how the war prospered. Then Daud said to Uriah, Go down unto your house, and wash your feet. And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go to his house. When they told Daud Uriah did not go down to his house, Daud said to Uriah, 'Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?' Uriah said to Daud. The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink, and to live with my wife? As you live and my soul lives, I will not do this thing. Then Daud said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will let you depart. So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day, and the next. And Daud invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk; and in the evening he went to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

In the morning Daud wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter he wrote, Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back, that he may be struck down and die. And as Joab was besieging the

city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city came and fought with Joab, and some of the servants among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite was slain also. Then Joab sent and told Daud all the news about the fighting; and he instructed the messenger, *When you have finished telling all the news about the fighting to the king, then, if the king anger thee, and if he says to you, Why did you go near the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who killed Abim elech the son of Jerub 'bsheth? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone upon him from the wall, so that he died at Thebes? Why did you go so near the wall? then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah is dead also.'*

So the messenger went, and came and told Daud all that Joab had sent him to tell. The messenger said to Daud, 'The men gained an advantage over us, and came out against us in the field; but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall; some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. Daud said to the messenger, "Thus shall you say to Joab, Do not let this matter trouble you, the sword devours now one and now another; strengthen your attack upon the city, and overthrow it.' And encourage him.

When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for her husband. And when the mourning was over, Daud sent and brought her over to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the thing that Daud had done displeased the Lord."¹⁵

After this narrative, the moral picture presented here, Daud cannot be looked upon as a man of character, far from being a prophet. No word other than down vicious can be found to describe the looking on another's wife with an evil eye, then performing an evil deed with her, then conspiring to have her husband killed, are low-down misdeeds for which no word in moral language can be found but wickedness. *Subhanaka haza buhtaan ul azeem.*

¹⁵ Samuel 2: Ch. 11, Verses 1-26

Biblical contradiction —

Before we offer a logical refutation of the aspersion cast on Daud's innocent personality, we would like to quote from the Bible itself how in other places, it describes Daud's unblemished holiness and Godliness.

In Samuel 1, we have:

"Now when the king was in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies round about, the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent. And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you."

"But the same night, the word of the Lord came to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant Daud,.....' Thus says the Lord: of hosts..... 'I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep that you should be prince over my people, Israel.; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great ones of the earth."¹⁶

"He reached from on high, he took me, he drew me out of many waters; He delivered me from my strong enemy from this who hated me; for they were too mighty for me.' They came upon me in my day of calamity; but the Lord was my stay; He brought me forth into a broad place; He delivered me because he delighted in me. The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanliness of my hands, he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his ordinances were before me' and from his statutes I did not turn aside; I was blameless before him and I kept myself blameless from guilt. Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanliness in his sight."¹⁷

Now these are the last words of Daud; the oracle of Daud, the son of Jesse; the oracle of the man who was raised on high; the anointed of God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of

¹⁶ Samuel 2: Ch. 7, Verses 3-8

¹⁷ Samuel 2 Ch. 22, Verses 18-25

Israel. The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me; his word is on my tongue."¹⁸

*Suleman said: "Thou hast shown great and steadfast love to my father, because he walked before thee in faithfulness, and in uprightness of heart towards thee."*¹⁹

*"Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, who with His hand has fulfilled what He promised with His mouth to Daud my father, and chosen him to be over my people Israel."*²⁰

*"Now therefore, O Lord, God of Israel, keep with Thy servant Daud my father what thou hast promised him, saying: There shall never fail you a man before me to sit upon the throne of Israel, if only your sons take heed to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before Me."*²¹

*"Yet for the sake of Daud your father..... I will not tear away all your kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of Daud My servant and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."*²²

*"And if you will hearken to all that I command you, and will walk in My ways, and do what is right in My eyes by keeping My statutes and My commandments, as Daud My servant did, I will be with you, and will build you a sure house, as I built for Daud, and will give Israel to you."*²³

All these quotations are from the Bible. They show that Daud was a beloved and empowered servant of Allah, communicated directly with Him; totally obedient to His law, righteous, holy and chaste, and leader and Allah's caliph over the Children of Israel in a land given them by Allah. And Allah's support was always his security. That is, he was an empowered ruler and elect

¹⁸ Samuel 2 Ch. 23, Verses, 1-3

¹⁹ Kings (I) Ch. 3

²⁰ Chronicles (2) Ch. 6, Verses 3 to 7

²¹ Chronicles (2) Ch. 6, Verse 16

²² Kings (I) Ch. 11, Verse 13

²³ Kings-(I) Ch. 11, Verse 38

prophet. It is impossible to understand how the people of the Scripture reconcile these contradictions and what respect Daud's personality holds in their eyes. If Daud is a prophet and king endowed with high character, what answer do they have about the Hittite Uriah's wife; and if her story is correct, then which Daud is it who deserves the praises stated above?

To the contrary, the Qur'an tells us in detail that Daud is Allah's elect and innocent prophet, His caliph, and ruler and commander of the Children of Israel.

وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيِّينَ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زُبُورًا (١)

(اسراء ج ١٥ ع ٦)

And We preferred some of the prophets above others, and unto Daud We gave the Psalms. (al Asra : 35)

وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوُدَ سُلَيْمَانَ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ (٢) (ص ج ٢٣ ع ٣)

And We bestowed on Daud, Suleman, How excellent a slave! (Sa'd : 30)

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ دَمِينًا فَضْلًا (٣) (سبا ج ٢٢ ع ٢)

And assuredly We gave Daud grace from Us. (Saba 10.)

وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهُ، وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصَّلَ الْخِطَابِ (٤)

(ص ج ٢٣ ع ٢)

We made his kingdom strong; and gave him wisdom and decisive speech. (S'ad : 20)

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا، وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَىٰ

كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (٥) (نمل ج ١٩ ع ٢)

And We verily gave knowledge unto Daud and Suleman, and they said: Praise be unto Allah Who hath preferred us above many of His believing slaves. (al Namal : 15)

As usual, the Qur'an refutes and corrects all those interpolations which have been introduced in the old Scriptures by their followers and have become items of their belief. It brings out of darkness into light those venerable parsonages, Daud and Suleman, to tells us that they were true *nabi* and message bearers of Allah, holy and free of the taint of sin.

It is a thousand pities that in spite of the Qur'an's clear announcement, some of our commentators have included this fictitious story of Uriah's wife in their commentaries of the Qur'an, and without supporting them with any reasoning, given them the status of Islamic traditions.

These simple-minded elders did not stop to think that today the Hebrew narratives they are quoting as Islamic commentaries of the Qur'an, will tomorrow be taken as really Islamic and become a source of mischief for the ummah and cause of their wrong direction. And it is surprising that old and present day scholars who, instead of strongly refuting the slanders, have tried to make them credible; and working by conjecture, injure the important and basic Muslim belief in the innocence of the prophets. What right has anyone to mention such rubbish in the commentaries when the Qur'an looks upon them as an enormity?

The Verse with which these commentators have intermingled their poison is in Surah e Sa'd of the Qur'an,

وَهَلْ أَتَكَ نَبُؤًا الْخَصْمِ - إِذْتَسَوَّرُوا الْمِحْرَابَ () إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَى
 دَاوُدَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ خَصْمَانِ بَغِي بَعْضُنَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ
 فَاحْكُم بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تُشْطِطْ وَهَدَيْنَا إِلَى سَوَاءِ الصِّرَاطِ () إِنَّ هَذَا
 أَخِي لَهُ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ نَعْجَةً وَلِيَ نَعْجَةً وَاحِدَةً فَقَالَ أَكْفَلْنِيهَا
 وَعَزَّنِي فِي الْخِطَابِ () قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ نَعَجِكَ إِلَى
 نَعَاجِهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْخُلَطَاءِ لَيَبْغِي بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَا هُمْ وَظَنَّ دَاوُدُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّهُ
 فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ () فَغَفَرْنَا لَهُ ذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِنْدَ
 نَا لِرُؤْفَى وَحُسْنِ مَّآبٍ () يَدَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ
 فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا نَسُوا يَوْمَ
 الْحِسَابِ () (ص ج ٢٣ ع ٢)

And hath the story of the litigants come unto thee? How they climbed the wall in the royal chamber: how they burst in on Daud, and he was afraid of them. They said, Be not afraid;

We are two litigants come unto thee; one of whom hath wronged the other, therefore, judge aright between us; be not unjust and show us the fair way.

Lo! This my brother hath ninety-and-nine ewes, while I had one ewe, and he said, Entrust it to me, and he conquered me in speech. (Daud) said: He hath wronged thee in demanding thine ewe in addition to his ewes, and lo! many partners oppress one another, save such as believe and do good works, and they are few. And Daud guessed that We had tried him, and he sought forgiveness of his Lord, and he bowed himself and fell down prostrate and repented. So We forgave him that and lo! he had access to Our presence, and a happy journey's end. (And it was said unto him) O Daud! We have set thee as a viceroy(caliph) in the earth, therefore, judge aright between mankind, and follow not desire that it beguile thee from the way of Allah. Lo! Those who wander from the way of Allah, have an awful doom, for as much as they forgot the Day of Reckoning. (Sa'd :21-26)

Here the reference is to a trial to which Daud was put by Allah. He did not recognise this at first, but all of a sudden the thought came, and, like all elect prophets, he turned to Allah on High, and sought forgiveness, and his repentance became his glory and one more cause for bringing him nearer to the Divine Being.

There is only so much to the story, but when some commentators saw that the Qur'an had given no details of the trial, and there was present in the Old Testament the story of Uriah's wife, which also mentions Allah's anger with Daud, they did not hesitate to make the stuff a commentary of the Qur'an and mixing it up with the trial, repentance and forgiveness, pasted it on the Holy Book!

Seeing this, the greater scholars and commentators could not control themselves, and logically proved that the spurious stuff had nothing to do with the commentary of these Verses of Surah e Sa'd. They are concoctions of Hebrew imagination containing slanderous and calumniating matter, for which there is no place in Islam.

Hafiz Imaduddin ibn Kathir writes in his commentary of Surah e Sa'd.

قد ذكر المفسرون ههنا قصة اكثرها ما خوذ من الاسرائيليات ولم

يثبت فيها عن المعصوم حديث يجب اتباعه

“Commentators have quoted a story which is undoubtedly of Hebrew origin. There is not one Tradition from the Holy Prophet ﷺ to oblige us to give credence to it.”²⁴

In stronger language he writes in his history al Bidaya wal Nihaya:

وقد ذكر كثير من المفسرين من السلف والخلف هنا قصصاً
واخباراً اكثرها اسرائيليات ومنها ما هو مكذوب لا محالة تركنا
ايرادهافي كتابنا قصداً اكتفاء واقتصاراً على مجرد تلاوة القصة من
القران العظيم وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“Early and later commentators have quoted narratives some of which are of Hebrew fabrication, and some utterly false. We have, therefore, deliberately omitted them contenting ourselves with no more than what the Qur'an tells us. Allah guides whomsoever He wills on the right path,”²⁵

Alluding to these Verses, Hafiz Muhammed b. Hazm writes in Kitab ul Fasl:

وهذا قول صادق صحيح لا يدل على شيء مما قاله المستهزؤون
الكاذبون المتعلقون بخرافات ولدها اليهود -

“The Qur'anic version is correct and in no way supports the narrative which the Jews have invented and these liars and ridiculers have quoted.”²⁶

Similarly, Khafaji in Nasim ul Riyaz, Qazi Ayyaz in Shifa, Abu Hayyan the Andalusian in Bahr ul Muheet, Imam Razi in Tafsir e Kabir, and other scholars, have discarded this as rubbish and proved that there is no detail forthcoming from the Prophet ﷺ concerning it

The correct version -

Leaving aside these concoctions, the commentaries made by the scholars are based either on references made by the Companions or keeping the Qur'an in

²⁴ Tafsir Ibn e Kathir Surah e Sa'd.

²⁵ Vol. 2. p. 13

²⁶ Al Fasl, Vol. 4. p.14

view, have been made in good faith. Therefore, it is these which are worth considering.

Allama Ibn Hazm says that the facts are only that two men quite unexpectedly entered Daud's chamber where he was engaged in prayers and because their dispute was real and they were in a hurry to have it decided, they jumped over the wall and came in. On hearing the plaintiff's case, Daud, by way of advising and reminding them spoke of the mischief of former times, telling them that the strong have always oppressed the weak and exploited them for their convenience, a very evil thing to do, except the believing devotees of Allah who were also doers of good, avoiding cruelty and were afraid of Allah; but of such there were few.

After these words, Daud in fairness announced his decision and disposed of the case. After the men went away, Daud's higher sense turned his heart and mind to reflect that the great and peerless kingdom Allah had bestowed on him was, in fact, a great trial for him. How far would he be able to fulfill the responsibilities attached to the honour of administering so great a population? And how should he express by deeds his gratitude for this Divine blessing bestowed on him?

Lost in this transcendent condition, Daud fell prostrate before the Divine One and sought forgiveness, acknowledging that without His assistance, it was beyond His servant's power to cope with the great responsibilities entrusted to him. This pleased Allah Whose forgiveness took Daud in its lap.

After the commentary, Ibn Hazm says, that seeking Divine forgiveness is so loved by the Divine Being that it is not necessary to bring up former sins for it and then react by begging forgiveness. Angels too solicit Divine forgiveness, although, as the Qur'an tells us, angels can commit no sin.

لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

"They do not disobey Allah, and do only what they are commanded."

The Qur'an says:

وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا
فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ

And they (angels) seek forgiveness for the believers, (saying): O Allah! Thou circumventest everything with Thy

mercy and Thy knowledge! Forgiveth them who turn to Thee and follow Thy path!

To this commentary of Ibn Hazam we should like to add that the Qur'an makes no mention of Daud having committed a sin, but by saying *fatanna-hu* only tells us that he was put to a trial; and, for a trial, it is never necessary that it should be related to a sin. For instance, the trials to which Job was put. Daud's action too has nothing to do with sinning, but, as a prophet, was an expression of his sense of responsibility, his devotion and his helplessness.

Although this commentary comprises the meaning of the Qur'anic Verses under consideration, and they make Daud's status as a prophet more prominent, the commentary is *ijtihadi*, interpretive, because the exact form of the trial is not mentioned in any Verse or Tradition, but related only to an expression of judgment.

In connection with these Verses, Abu Muslim says that when two men, a plaintiff and a respondent presented their case before Daud, he, without giving a chance to the respondent to speak, began to advise them in words that favoured the plaintiff. This was against the principles of administering justice, and, although Daud's words were only by way of advice, and he had not yet pronounced his verdict, it was unbecoming of a prophet of such a high status. This was the trial he had been subjected to.

But since Allah on High warns His near ones among His devotees over such slips, He also apprised Daud similarly. Therefore, Daud sought forgiveness of the Divine Being, and the Divine Being blessed him with forgiveness; indeed, exalted his status all the more.²⁷

We may extend the commentary. After all this, Allah on High advised Daud that he was not like other kings of this world, who are careless of their duties in pursuance of right and justice and rule only for their own interests; that he was a deputy and caliph on Allah's behalf, and service to humanity was his distinguishing crest; that, therefore, it was necessary for him to be careful every moment about truth and justice, and not let there be any slip of error, and keep to the straight path. That is why the Qur'an, after the Verses, emphasizes,

"O Daud! We have made thee a caliph in this world."

In each of these two commentaries both the scholars have explained that the verdict was not an arbitrary one but based on facts, and the litigants were not angels but human beings, as the Qur'an implies.

²⁷ Rooh ul Ma'ani. Vol. 23, p. 168

Although this conclusion too is derived from logical deduction, it very closely approximates the coherent order of the Qur'an, for which reason it has been quite acceptable to the commentators.

But there is in each one of the explanations separately an irritating hesitation which is worth considering. In the first explanation, the question arises that if the implication of the Verses is to be accepted, then there appears to be no connection with the next Verse; "O Daud! We have made thee a caliph in this earth." What is the idea of stating a great blessing of Daud which is not to be found in the Qur'an for any other prophet, besides Adam.

And the irritation in Abu Muslim's commentary is that when it is the usual practice among kings and rulers to pronounce judgment after hearing both the parties to any litigation, that it is natural to do so, how can it be believed that a great prophet like Daud gave his verdict in favour of one party without hearing what the other side might have to say, or gave expression to his own inclination. This is not so fine or deep a point which Daud accidentally did not appreciate, and he made a slip of error.

Therefore, we consider that the better commentary is that which fits in with the context of the Qur'an, its style and coherence. It is based on a Tradition reported by Abdullah ibn Abbas that "Daud had set up his weekly programme. Of every four days, one was set aside for devotional prayers, one for deciding cases, one for his personal occupations, and one day for preaching and guiding."²⁸

The most important of this division was the day reserved for devotional prayers. Of course, he offered his prayer everyday, but he reserved one exclusively for such devotions and did no do other work on it. The Qur'anic words *inna-hu awwab* emphasize this.

It is proved by the Qur'an and the chronicles among the Children of Israel that Daud, so as not to have anyone intrude and interfere, used to lock himself up in a secluded room for the purpose of prayers and magnifying his Lord. In his programme this was the only day on which no one could reach him and there was no connection between him and the people. During the remaining other days contact could be made with him for an emergency, and they could approach him for their problems.

The point to consider is that although secluded devotional worship and glorifying Allah are a Muslim's life-objective, for those whom Allah has chosen for guidance and service of mankind, the execution of duty is preferred

²⁸ Rooh ul Ma'ani, Vol. 23, p. 162

by Allah to secluded devotions. No doubt that the more a sufi and disciplined ascetic withdraws himself to his exercise of devotional worship, the higher his status of achievement. But a prophet is chosen specially and the duties assigned him by Allah are to guide and teach and serve humanity. It is for him to vindicate the commands of Allah by establishing a relationship with the masses, not to go into seclusion and become a *sufi*.

Although Daud's programming of the days is praiseworthy, for him to set aside one day exclusively for devotional worship and withdraw from all worldly connections, was against the office of a prophet and caliph, and in no way becoming a prophet of so high a status as Daud. Allah had chosen and blessed him not for becoming an ascetic and recluse but to carry out the duties of a prophet and caliph, service of temporal and spiritual matters pertaining to Allah's creatures, and thus the acme of his work was guidance and service of Allah's creatures, not abundance of worship in seclusion. So to put an end to this programming of Daud, Allah imposed a trial (*fitna*) on him, that two men between whom there was a dispute, jumped the wall of his apartment and entered his presence. Unexpectedly finding two strangers before him, Daud, was naturally upset. The intruders assured him that there was nothing to be afraid of, that the reason for their coming was such and such dispute between them, and all they wanted was a decision of their case. Daud, then, heard their case and gave them the advice mentioned above.

The Qur'an overlooks the common requisites of announcing a judgments, because they can be easily understood by any one. Daud's verdict must have been impartial and just. Light is thrown only on the part relative to guidance; namely, the strong tyrannising over the weak.

After announcing his verdict, Daud asked himself why Allah had tried him in this way. Then, realising the facts, fell prostrate and sought Divine forgiveness. Allah honoured him by accepting his prayer and increased his status all the more. Then advised him, "O Daud! We have sent you as Our caliph; therefore, it is your duty to fulfill the responsibilities of this office; and remember that in this world, justice is the basic of all fundamentals; and never to wander away from the straight path."

Apart from the opinion based on conjecture, or derivations from the Companions, the well-known Traditionist Haakim has quoted in Mustadrak a commentary from Abdullah b. Abbas which has been admitted by other Traditionists and scholars as correct. It, therefore, takes precedence over the versions we have given above.

Alluding to Daud's trial, Abdullah b. Abbas says, "Once Daud said proudly in the presence of Allah on High, 'Lord! there is not a moment of day or night when Daud or any one of his children is not engaged in glorifying Thee.'"

Allah disapproved of this arrogant style of His dear and near prophet, and Daud was immediately inspired that all he had was due to Allah's mercy and blessings: otherwise how could there be in him or in his children the power that they should continue with such discipline, but now that he had made the claim he would be subjected to an ordeal. Daud prayed that he be apprised of the ordeal beforehand but this prayer was not heard, and Daud was given the ordeal as stated in the Qur'an.²⁹

That is, by being pre-occupied with having to announce a judgment in a case, he was deprived of a devotional exercise of magnifying Allah; and, incidentally, no one from among his children was engaged in such magnification at that time.

From this version also we derive the same conclusion that the matter was not one of sin or transgression, but only that it was not becoming of a prophet of Daud's stature, and Allah simply gave him a warning.

Whatever the scholars or commentators might have said, whether acceptable or not, or whatever we may derive from the tradition quoted by Abdullah ibn Abbas, the Hebrew anecdote has no connection whatever with the Verses of the Qur'an.

Daud's age —

Haakim quotes a Tradition in his Mustadrak :

"Abu Hurayra reports that the Prophet ﷺ said that when Adam's offspring were extracted from his backbone and shown to him, he saw a handsome man with a shining forehead, and asked Allah who this was. He was told that this some one who would come long after and his name was Daud. Adam asked what age had been assigned to him and he was told, "sixty years". Adam said that he would like to donate forty years from his age to this youth. When the angel of death came to Adam to take his soul, Adam said that there still were forty years left of his life. The angel reminded him that he had forgotten that he had given away those forty years to his son Daud."³⁰

²⁹ Mustadrak, Vol. 2, p 433

³⁰ Mustadrak, Vol. 2, Kitab ul Tarikh.

It seems from this Tradition that Daud lived a hundred years. The Old Testament states in the Chronicles and Kings that Daud died in old age and ruled over Israel for forty years.

*"Thus Daud the son of Jesse ruled over all Israel. The time that he reigned over Israel was forty years.; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. Then he died in a good old age, full of years, riches, and honour."*³¹

Jafar b. Muhammed says that Daud reigned seventy years;³² and Abdullah b. Abbas, that Daud passed away unexpectedly on a Sabbath day when he was engaged in prayers, while flocks of birds cast a canopy of shade over him.³³

The Old Testament says :

*"Then Daud slept with his father and was buried in the city of Daud."*³⁴

LESSONS —

The vision and the lessons which the events of the sacred life of Daud present are vast, we shall mention only some for your attention:

When Allah wills to exalt any one and bless him with exceptional blessings, He brushes up the man's natural faculties and makes them shine forth and his destiny twinkles as a bright star. So when Allah wished to make Daud His messenger and prophet of high status, He had a tyrant king slain at his hands, so as to impress everyone with his valour and steadfastness, and all Israel accepted him as their beloved leader.

Sometimes it happens that we look upon a thing as ordinary but later it proves to be of priceless value. For instance, there is the difference between the condition of Daud's childhood, and, later, his fighting in support of Truth, being blessed as a prophet and holding fast to the Divine Being, and inviting to the Truth.

³¹ Chronicles 1, Ch. 29, Verses 26-28.

³² Mustadrak, Vol. 2, Kitab ul Tarikh

³³ Faiz ul Bari, Vol. 2, Kitab ul Anmbiya

³⁴ Kings 1, Ch. 2, vs 10

One difference between a caliph of Allah and a temporal, *taghuti*, king is always apparent, namely, that in spite of his power, the features always prominent are self-denial and service of humanity, while arrogance, self-centredness, arbitrariness and tyranny will always be found dominating the latter, exploiting Allah's creatures for his own convenience.

It is the Divine Law that the more one is grateful to Allah, acknowledging His blessings, the more is he blessed with rewards and benedictions. Daud's entire life is proof of this.

Although religion or *deen* is related more to spiritual matters, material power supports it to a great extent. In other words, *deen* and the temporal and spiritual *millat* is self-sufficient for reforming the present conditions, and security of its mandated justice is provided by the caliphate and its power; as Hadret Usman's famous dictum goes.

ان الله ليزع بالسُّلطان ما لا يزع بالقران

"Indeed, Allah takes the work of security by means of one vetted with power which is not achieved through the Qur'an."

The essence of what the Qur'an tells us frequently in various places is that man should possess the faith, but sovereignty, and governance and their loss are in the hands of Allah alone. Of this truth, the history of emperors and despotic rulers is living proof.

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (آل عمران)

Allah! Thou Owner of sovereignty! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt; and Thou withdrawest sovereignty from whom Thou wilt; Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt. In Thy hand is the good! Lo! Thou art able to do all things! (Aal e Imran 26)

But Allah has determined a law for this blessing and withdrawal which, it is appropriate to define, as the *sunnah* or practice of Allah.

The law is that rulership and kingdom are granted to nations in either of two ways: one, as inherited from Allah and the other, by temporal means.

In the first, when a peoples are granted rulership, Allah's inheritance is thoroughly active in its faith and deeds. That is, its faith being related to Allah the High, it should be correctly channelised, as well as its deeds, individual and collective, in order that the people become so highly established in goodness and peace that they may be included in the Qur'an's definition of *saleheen*.

Such a people deserves Allah's reward of what is titled as Allah's caliphate, the outward form of Divine vicegerency, and inheritance of the prophets and *rusul*, messengers of the Divine.

It is Allah's promise that whichever peoples lives in the inheritance of the prophets and *rusul*, it shall also be owner of the earth's inheritance. Then, even if there be mountains of earthly obstruction Allah will remove them to fulfill His promise. As the Qur'an says:

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِن بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا
عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ ()

*And after the Reminder, We have written in the Psalms that
My good slaves shall inherit the earth.*

And in the Verse:

إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

*Verily all the earth belongs to Allah; He gives it as an
inheritance to whomsoever of His slaves He pleases.*

it is clarified that Allah's pleasure is that the earth's inheritance shall be fated only to those of His slaves who are *saaleh*, righteous, and possess the capacity or talent. And if this capacity is absent from a peoples, even if they profess Islam, the earth's inheritance shall not be fated to it. Caliphate cannot be its right, and neither has Allah any promise of honour and greatness for them.

But to run the affairs of the world, for the sake of its order and discipline, Allah in His wisdom grants its governance to whomsoever He pleases or withdraws it from whomsoever He pleases, and the law of nature operates in this granting and withdrawing, just as it does in affiliating cause and effect. There are so many countless different reasons for grant and withdrawal that it is beyond man to know what they are about.

The ugliest aspect of this law is that Muslims are slaves and subjects and a government of *shyrk* and *kufir* reign over them. This is Allah's wrath and punishment which have befallen Muslims because of their misdeeds and want

of developing their talents. In such a condition, the lesson is that the ruler is not given a governance because Allah is happy with him, but because the rightful owners of the inheritance have forfeited their right by their own evil deeds. And because of the exigencies of the universe, the condition for government is neither of Muslim nor non-Muslim.

وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ

“Allah giveth sovereignty to whomsoever He willeth.”

If Muslims can open their eyes and bring a revolution in their evil lives and achieve the merit of *saleheen*. Allah's promise too will give them glad tidings.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي
ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا (١)

Allah hath made a covenant with those who believe and are doers of good deeds that He will make them rulers in the earth as He didst make those before them rulers; and He will establish the religion which He hath chosen for them, and in place of fear, He will bestow on them peace.



HAZRAT SULEMAN (Solomon) ﷺ

Suleman is Daud's son and, therefore, his line is traceable through Judah to Jacob. His mother's name is not known. The Old Testament gives it as Saba but since it makes Saba to have been first Uriah's wife, and the entire story is foul and fictitious, the name is not acceptable as correct.

In a Tradition Ibn Maja quotes the Prophet ﷺ as saying that Suleman's mother once advised him that he should not sleep the whole night, because sleeping the whole night would deprive one of good deeds on the Last Day.

The Qur'an, too, tells us no more than that he was descended from Yaqoob and Ibrahim.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ -
(الانعام ج ٧ ع ١٠)

And We bestowed on him (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob, and instructed them and David and Suleman from among Abraham's children. (al An'aam)

وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوُدَ سُلَيْمَانَ (ص)

And We bestowed Suleman on David. (Sa'd)

Suleman's name comes sixteen times in the Qur'an, in a few places with some detail, and briefly in others in connection with the blessings bestowed by Allah on him and his father David.

The Table given below may be of interest:

Surah	Verse	No. of times
al Baqar	102	1
al Nisa	163	1
al An'aam	85	1
al Anmbiya	78, 79, 82	3
al Namal	15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 36, 44	7

Saba	12	1
Sa'd	30,34	2
Total		16

Childhood —

Allah had vested Suleman with great wisdom and ability to decide cases in his very childhood, as the Qur'an states in David's story, as stated before.¹

David had recognised this great talent of Suleman and allowed him to participate in administrative matters of the state, specially in connection with judicial matters.

David's legacy --

Chroniclers tell us that Suleman had already reached his age of natural maturity when David passed away, and Allah made him David's heir both as prophet and administrative ruler. Thus, accompanying prophethood, Israeli governance too came into his hands. As the Qur'an says:

وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمٰنُ دَاوُدَ (نمل)

And Suleman became David's inheritor (al Namal)

Ibn Kathir says that here prophethood and rulership are implied, but not inheritance of wealth. David had many other children who could not be deprived of their due shares.

In a Tradition found in all the six Tradition Books, we have from a number of his Companions that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The inheritance of us prophets does not go by wealth, whatever we leave goes to charity."

This Tradition clarifies that no one becomes an heir to whatever the prophets leave after their death, but is disposed of in Allah's name among the needy and beggars as their right.

A prophet's nature, whose life objective is preaching Allah's word and inviting to the Truth, does not tolerate that such low things as material property should be his bequest. Whatever he has as a human being for life's preservation, becomes Allah's property at the time of his death, and is, therefore, to be shared by those in need, not by the offspring or other relatives.

¹ The reference is to Verse *وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمَانِ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَسَتْ فِيهِ عَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ*

Prophethood –

We learn from some clarified Verses of the Qur'an as well as the credible chronicles about the prophets that Allah bestows prophethood on His chosen ones after they attain maturity of age,² so that they are given the extra burden after they have already achieved ripeness of intelligence and experience. At this stage they are stable and level headed according to their capacity and talents. It was the same with Suleman on whom Allah bestowed prophethood together with rulership and caliphate.

إِنَّمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَوْحَيْنَا
إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى وَأَيُّوبَ
يُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ
(نساء ج ٦ ع ٢٣)

Lo! We inspire thee as We inspired Noah and the prophet after him and We inspired Abraham and Ismail and Isaac and Jacob and his tribe and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Suleman.
(al Nisa 163)

وَكُلًّا آتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا
(الانبیاء)

And to each of them (David and Suleman) We gave rulership and wisdom (prophethood).
(al Anmbiya)

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ دَوَّسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا
(ص)

And verily We gave knowledge (prophethood) to David and Suleman.
(Sa'd)

Special virtues of Suleman –

Allah endowed Suleman as he had David with some blessings peculiar to him alone.

Language of birds --

He bestowed on David and Suleman the faculty of understanding the language of birds as though the birds spoke like human beings. The Qur'an says:-

² The reference is to (al Anmbiya) وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا وَقَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى
 كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ () وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُدَ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ
 عَلَّمْنَا مَنطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأَوْتَيْنَا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۗ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ
 الْمُبِينُ ()

And We verily gave knowledge unto David and Suleman and they said, praise be to Allah who hath preferred us above many of his slaves; and Suleman was David's heir, and he said, O people! Lo, we have been taught the language of birds and have been given abundance of all things. This surely is evident favour.
 (al Namal 15-16)

Here bird language does not mean that David and Suleman understood by guessing the tone of sounds what the birds intended. Such understanding is seen among many people. The sounds at times of hunger and thirst of domesticated animals, their joy and satisfaction, expression of fidelity on seeing their master, and the difference of barking at strangers and enemies, as well as their intentions are quite well understood.

Bird language also does not mean that art which has been devised in the present age of learning through conjecture and effort, and is looked upon as a branch of zoology. It is no more than conjectural, derived from experiments. Even zoologists do not look upon it with certainty. It can be acquired by anybody after a little effort, otherwise the Qur'an would not mention David's and Suleman's knowledge with such great emphasis.

The style in which the Qur'an has stated it and David and Suleman expressed their gratitude, it is evident that this was so great a blessing for them that it must be called a miracle. They understood the language of birds as they did of human beings. Their knowledge transcended the causal things of this world and was an endowment of a special law.

Our intelligence can go only so far as to appreciate that this is not impossible for the special law. In the lexicon meaning of the word and according to human intelligence, it is sufficient for *nutq*, speech, only to have sound. It is not necessary for it to have the speech of human beings. In bird and beast languages both voice and intonation are present. The understanding of bird language was a gift which should be understood as a portent of Allah, reserved only for those holy personages. Baydawi and we agree that David and Suleman understood bird language in a way quite different from that of the usual of this world and was a special endowment of Allah, but we differ in some details of commentary. Baydawi thinks that the languages of animals are

understood in their various conditions with the help of imagination, and definite certainty of them is achieved not by effort and exercise but as a gift of the Divine Being, as with David and Suleman, while we hold that both these prophets understood the languages as they did of human beings, whether this was as a miracle displayed at their hands, or whether the sound of birds and beasts itself possesses qualities of language by which they understand and be understood one another, normally recognised by differences of their condition.³ But their language is weaker by far than that of human beings. The Qur'an's description of Suleman's conversation with the hoopoe confirms our contention.

Subjugation of winds—

Another distinction of Suleman as prophet was that Allah subordinated the winds to his command. Whenever he wanted, he could complete a month's journey in the morning, and a month's journey in the evening. The Qur'an has stated three distinguished conditions concerning the winds: that they were subordinated to him; that, in spite of being fast and rough, they would become gentle and comfortable, yet, despite being gentle, they would be so swift that Suleman's journey in a single morning or evening was equivalent to a whole month's distance covered by a continuously galloping horse. That is, Suleman's throne, transcending machine propelled aircraft, was airborne flying faster than the fastest of aircrafts.

For a naturalist this may be incredible, but what we find difficult to understand is that when it is universally admitted that there is so great a difference between man's faculty of thinking and action and what one finds easy to do, another believes impossible, then, on the same principle, why is it denied that just as Allah has attached the things of this universe to their causes in the normal laws of nature, *qudrat*, similarly there are special laws of nature and rules of human nature, *fitrat*, which are peculiar to such works as we are considering here. The holy personages (prophets) have certain knowledge of them through Divine inspiration just as intellectuals derive their knowledge through study of cause and result. Present day mundane knowledge falls short of understanding the other. Therefore, when such happenings take place as are understandable by Divine inspiration why should proven facts be denied merely on the strength of conjecture? Besides, our lack of knowledge about something is no proof of its not being in existence.

³ Zoologists say that animal language may be linked to telegraphy and is mutually expressed and understood by them, intonation and repetition have much to do with this, rather it should be said that telegraphic signals have been adapted from animal sounds.

The way of certainty is to admit without polemics the fact of wind subjugation and travel speeds of journey without trying to interpret them. The details given in the biographies and commentary books about Suleman's throne and his journeys by morning and evening are all from Israeli literature. It is surprising that a researcher of Ibn Kathir's calibre should quote them as though they were acknowledged subjects, although from the historical angle they are subject to ambiguity and complications. All the Qur'an tells us is:

وَلَسُّلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ عَاصِيفَةً تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا
وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمِينَ ()
(انبیاء ج ۱۷ ع ۲)

And unto Suleman (We subdued) the wind in its raging. It set by his command towards the land which we had blessed. And of everything We are aware. (al Anbiyah 81)

وَلَسُّلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ غُدُوُّهَا شَهْرٌ وَرَوَاحُهَا شَهْرٌ (سبأ ج ۲۲ ع ۲)

And unto Suleman (We gave) the wind whereof the morning's course was a month's journey, and the evening's course a month's journey. (Saba 12)

فَسَخَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيحَ تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ رُخَاءً حَيْثُ أَصَابَ ()

(ص ج ۲۳ ع ۳)

So We made the wind subservient unto him, setting fair by his command whithersoever he intended. (Sa'd 36)

Subjugation of Jinn and beast —

Another distinguished mark of Suleman's governance and not granted to any other, was that not only were human beings his subjects, jinn and animals too were subservient to him. All obedient to his command and power.

In this connection some agnostics denying miracles and the existence of jinns, have said ridiculous things. They say that by the word jinn is implied a community of people who at that time were very tall and able-bodied and no one but Suleman succeeded in overpowering them.

As for subjugation of animals, the only mention is of Hudhud, and here no bird is implied. It was the name of some person who was appointed to survey the water sources. It was an old custom that human beings used to name their children after the animals they worshipped. This subject has become a branch

of knowledge known as Tootism. People indulging in such commentary making are either agnostics who deliberately distort the facts, or, being ignorant of the teachings of the Qur'an persist, on illogical arguments.

The Qur'an has said in a number of places that the jinn are a species of their own quite separate from human beings. We have discussed this subject in Part I of this work; here we need quote but one Verse from the Qur'an:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ()

We have created jinn and human beings only that they might worship Me.

In this verse the jinn and human beings are shown as separate species, and the reason for their creation is given. To say that the jinn were from among human beings is nothing but ignorance.

Similarly, the Qur'an very clearly describes the hudhud as a bird, the hoopoe. No one then has the right to go into interpretations about it.

وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَأَ أَرَى الْهُدُودَ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ ()

(نمل ج ١٩ ع ٢٠)

And he sought among the birds, and said, how is it that I see not the hoopoe, or is he among the absentees?

(Namal 30)

Allah bestowed the peerless blessing on Suleman that his rule was over, besides human beings, also on jinns, animals and wind, all subservient to him. This was in response to his prayer.

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكًا لَّا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِي ۗ إِنَّكَ

أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ () (ص ج ٢٣ ع ٣)

He said: Forgive me! And bestow on me sovereignty such as shall not belong to any after me. Lo! Thou art the Benefactor!

(Sa'd 35)

Accordingly Allah endowed him with such rulership as was not granted to anyone before him, nor will be granted ever after.

It has been reported by Abu Hurayra that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Last night a rebel jinn quite unexpectedly tried to interfere with my prayers, but Allah helped me to overpower him and I caught hold of him and, intended to tie him

up to one of the pillars of the mosque so that all of you might see him the next morning, but just then I remembered my brother Suleman's prayer that he had once made;

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَهَبْ لِيْ مُلْكًا لَّا يَنْبَغِيْ لِأَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِيْ ؕ ()

(ص ج ٢٣ ع ٣)

"My Lord! grant me sovereignty such that no one shall possess after me."

And immediately, I released him after rebuking him.

By the words, 'I remembered my brother Suleman's prayer' is meant that though Allah has embodied in me all the distinctions, blessings and virtues of all prophets, and, therefore, the community of jinns is subjugated to me, since Suleman had assumed the distinction to be peculiar to himself, I did not think it proper to continue with my intention.'

The building of Jerusalem—

Allah has made jinns such creatures as can perform the most difficult of laborious tasks with ease. Suleman, therefore, planned to build a city around the synagogue and also rebuild the synagogue. He wanted to do this with the finest of stones irrespective of the distance they could be obtained from. The means available to him were not sufficient for such a project. It could be executed only with the help of jinns. He took this service from them for only they could bring the finest of rocks and stones from far away.

It is commonly believed that Jerusalem and Masjid-e-Aqsa were built during Suleman's time, but this is not correct. In a Tradition quoted both by Bukhari and Muslim, we are told that Abu Zar Ghaffari once asked the Prophet ﷺ which mosque was the first to be built in the world. He answered, "Masjid e Haram," And the next after, Abu Zar asked. "The Masjid e Aqsa." Abu Zar asked the third time what was the intervening period between the building of the two. The Prophet replied, "Forty years."

But the intervening period between Abraham's time and Suleman is more than a thousand years. Therefore, the meaning of the Tradition is that just as Abraham laid the foundation of Masjid e Haram and it became the cause of populating Makkah, similarly Jacob built the Jerusalem Mosque which became the cause of populating Jerusalem.

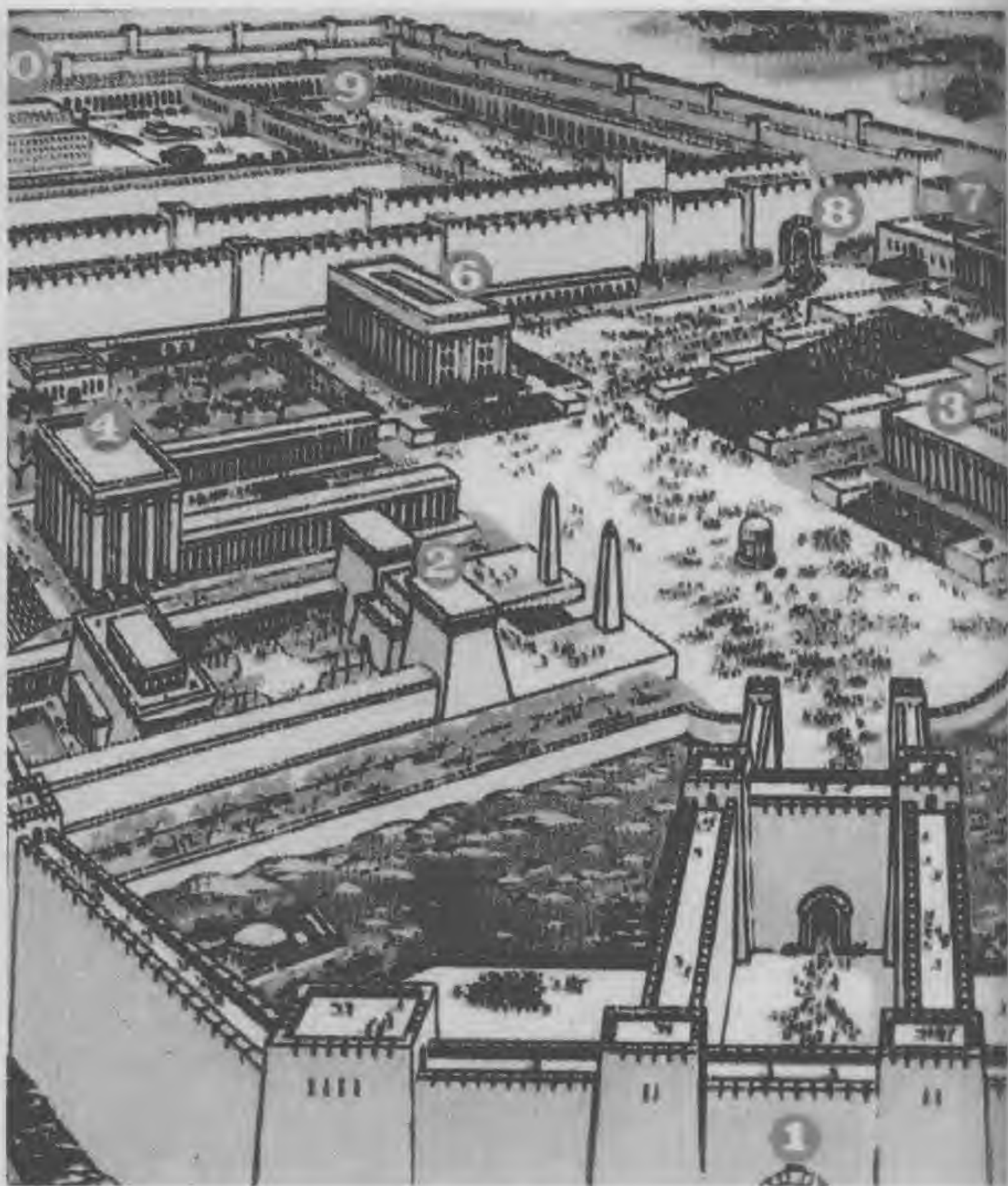
Then, after a long time, the city of Jerusalem and the Mosque were rebuilt by Suleman and because of the subjugation of the jinn, there came into being a construction that till this day is a marvel. Where were these giant stones



Sulayman's Temple

After Solomon's Temple was destroyed, the only wall of the temple that remained was turned into the Jews. After conquering Jerusalem during the 7th century, the Muslims built the Mosque of 'Umar and the Dome of the Rock where the temple once stood. Jerusalem still retains this. In the picture at the right is seen Dome of the Rock.





Solomon's Temple had the most advanced technology of the time and a superior understanding of aesthetics. In the upper plan is shown the center of Jerusalem during the prophet Sulayman's reign. 1) Southwest door 2) Queen's palace 3) Sulayman's palace 4) Entrance with 32 pillars 5) Law court 6) The Forest of Lebanon 7) The house of the high priests 8) The entrance of the Temple 9) The courtyard of the Temple 10) The temple

brought from, and how and what were the instruments that raised them to such heights and cemented them together.

The jinn community built other constructions too for Suleman, and manufactured things that at that time were looked upon as wonders.

وَمِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ مَنْ يَفُوضُونَ لَهُ، وَيَعْمَلُونَ عَمَلًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ، وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حَفِظِينَ ()
(انبیاء ج ۱۷ ع ۲)

And of the evil ones (subdued We unto him some who dived for pearls) for him and did other works, and We were warders unto them.
(al Anmbiya 82)

وَمِنَ الْجِنِّ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ * وَمَنْ يَزِغْ مِنْهُمْ عَنْ أَمْرِنَا نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ () يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ، مَا يَشَاءُ مِنْ مَحَارِبٍ وَ تَمَاثِيلَ وَ جِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ وَ قُدُورٍ رَسِيتٍ * إِعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُدَ شُكْرًا * وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرُونَ ()
(سبأ ج ۲۲ ع ۲)

And We gave him certain of the jinn who worked before him by permission of his Lord. And such of them as deviated from Our command them We caused to taste the punishment of flaming fire. They made for him what he wished: synagogues and statues, basins like wells and boilers built into the ground. Give thanks, O House of David! Few of My bondsmen are thankful!
(Saba 12-13)

وَ حُثَيْرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودَهُ، مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ ()
(نمل ج ۱۹ ع ۱)

And there were gathered unto Suleman his armies of the jinn and of human-kind, and of the birds, and they were set in battle order.
(al Namal 17)

وَالشَّيْطَانِ كُلِّ بَنَاءٍ وَغَوَاصٍ () وَآخَرِينَ مُقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ ()
(ص ج ۲۳ ع ۳)

And the unruly, every builder and diver (We made subservient) And others linked together in chains (saying)

This is Our gift, so bestow thou or withhold without reckoning. (S'ad : 37-39)

Shah Abdul Qadir says that although Allah bestowed such glorious blessings on Suleman and even told him that in expending or withholding whatever he wished there would be no questioning, he looked upon it all as a trust from Allah and spent nothing of it for his personal use but earned his living by making baskets.

Baydawi quotes a Hebrew anecdote here that the jinns had made Suleman's throne with such craft that below the throne stood two awesome blood-thirsty lions and two eagles with wings spread out to overcast their shadow on it.

When Suleman came to sit on his throne the lions would sit down, the throne would be lowered. Then when he had sat, the lions would stand up again and immediately the terrifying eagles would spread their wings to overcast a shade over the king. Similarly, the jinn had made huge cooking pots balanced on stoves and because of their weight were immovable. Great pools were carved out of rocks. The total time taken on the building of Jerusalem and the synagogue (masjid e Aqsa) and other things was only seven years.⁴

The Old Testament mentions these constructions in a number of places.

"And this is the account of the forced labour which King Suleman levied to build the house of the Lord, and his own house and the Millo and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer and Lower Bethhoron and Baalath and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, and all the store cities that Suleman had and the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and whatever Suleman desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and in all the land of his dominion...." (KingsI-Ch. 9, Vs 15-20)

A long list is given of the pools carved out of rocks, cooking vessels, pictures and the valuable stones used.⁶

Springs of copper –

Since Suleman was fond of architecture, the construction of great buildings,

⁴ Baydawi Surah e Saba

⁵ Kings I Ch.9 verses 15-20

⁶ KingsI Ch. 1 verses 7, 8

and awe-inspiring forts, he wanted them to be of solid strength, and it was necessary that some molten minerals should be used in place of clay, but how could such material be available in large quantities. This was a question to which he looked for an answer, but Allah made his difficulty easy by making the earth gush out springs of copper.

Some scholars have stated that Allah used to melt copper for Suleman whenever he required it, and in this way, it was a portent for him. Before this time the melting of metals was unknown.

Najjar says that Allah blessed Suleman in this way that wherever in the ground there was heat and copper flowed like water above it. He revealed it to him. Before now no one knew about the presence of molten metal springs in the earth.⁷

Ibn Kathir, quoting from Qatada, thinks that these springs were in Yemen and Allah informed Suleman about them.⁸

The Qur'an makes no mention of such details and the acceptance of them is left to the reader. The Old Testament too makes no special mention of them.

The war horses –

The Qur'an has summarily referred to an incident about Suleman:

وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوُدَ سُلَيْمَانَ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ إِذْ عَرَضَ عَلَيْهِ
بِالْعَشِيِّ الصَّافِيَاتُ الْجِيَادُ () فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَنْ
ذِكْرِ رَبِّي حَتَّى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ () رُدُّوهَا عَلَيَّ فُطِفِقَ مَسْحًا
بِالسُّوقِ وَالْأَعْنَاقِ ()

(ص ج ٢٣ ع ٣)
*And We bestowed on David Suleman How excellent a slave!
Lo! He was ever turning in repentance to us. When there
were shown to him at eventide light-footed coursers and he
said, Lo! I have preferred the good (of the world) to the
remembrance of my Lord, till they were taken out of sight
behind the curtain. Then he said, bring them back to me and
fell to slashing (with his sword) legs and their necks.*

(Sa'd: 30-33)

⁷ Qasas ul Anmbiya (Arabic) p.393

⁸ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya. Vol2, p. 28

We have three different comments from the Companions about these Verses, one from Ali ibn Abu Talib, and two from Abdullah ibn Abbas. Of the latter, one is on Hassan Basri authority and the other on Ali ibn Abi Talha's.

According to Ali ibn Abu Talib, Suleman had to go to war, and ordered that horses should be brought out from the stables.

While he was inspecting them, the time for pre-sunset (asr) prayers came but he forgot about it, and the sun soon went down. When he realised this, he said, "I acknowledge that love for property overcame my remembrance of Allah." In the regret he had the horses brought back and he slaughtered them all because they had been the cause of his forgetfulness.

According to the version, the Verse **أَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّي** would mean: "Indeed, neglecting Allah's remembrance I was overcome by love of property", and the Verse **تَوَارَتْ حَتَّى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ** the pronoun in **تَوَارَتْ** refers to the sun which is contained in the phrase, meaning, **تَوَارَتْ الشَّمْسُ بِالْحِجَابِ** and on the **طَفِقَ مَسْحًا**, **طَفِقَ** implies **daraba** to mean he cut their fetlocks and necks.

Ibn Kathir agrees with this version and says that most of the old scholars hold the same opinion. He thinks that this action of Suleman was not deliberate but something similar to what happened with the Prophet ﷺ during the battle of the Trenches, when the pre-sunset prayer time passed and he with his companions offered qada or late compensatory prayers. And when Suleman slaughtered his best war-horses in his love for Allah, Allah rewarded him graciously by subjugating the winds to him.⁹

Abdullah ibn Abbas's version which has been transmitted by Hassan Basri, the fact is that at the time for planning a battle, Suleman ordered the horses to be brought before him, the incidents given in the last para took place but he had the horses brought back, and he patted them and brushed his hand over their necks and legs, saying that they must not in future become the cause of such forgetfulness for him.¹⁰

⁹ Tafsir ibn Kathir vol 4. Surah e Sa'd, and Tarikh e ibn Kathir vol.2, p.25

¹⁰ Fath ul Bari vol. 6, p.356



Bait-ul-Muqaddas-Jerusalem



An underground construction found in Jerusalem. It is said that this was the stable of Hazrat Suleman عليه السلام.

A view of Jerusalem from Mount of olive.



Here *mas-ha* means massaging, rubbing gently. The meaning of the whole narrative would mean that although Suleman's forgetfulness was due to the forthcoming battle, and taking the horses to be the cause, he did what expressed his regret, and also that he did not want the animals to be victims of his anger, but only to express his sadness.

As against these two versions, that from Abdullah ibn Abbas according to Ali ibn Talha mentions neither prayers being delayed or missed, nor the sun setting, nor slaughtering the horses, but only that on the eve of going to battle, Suleman ordered that the horses be brought before him. When they came, and since he was well versed in the knowledge of their breed and characteristics, and he found them thoroughbred, swift and handsome and so many of them, he was happily satisfied, and said, "My love for these horses is a part of my remembrance of Allah", while he thought in this strain the horses were on the way back to their stables, and had disappeared from his sight. He ordered that they be brought back again, and when they came, out of his love and that they were meant for warfare, he patted and stroked their necks and legs, making them intimate with himself.

Thus the Verse would be translated, "My love for property (love for war-horses is my love for remembrance of Allah; and the pronoun in *tawarat-u bil hthiab* refers to *safanat ul jiyad*. That is when the horses went out of sight, sunset not necessary, the word *mazha* has the meaning commonly associated with it."¹¹

Ibn Jarir, Tibri and Imam Razi prefer this version as being the more intelligent. They say that there were thousands of horses which had been trained for battlefield and besides, even if Suleman's prayer time had lapsed, what fault was it of the horses that they should be subjected to such punishment? Therefore, the commentary ascribed to Ali ibn Abu Talib cannot hold weight.

Evaluation—

After considering the various commentaries, we find those of Imam Razi and Ibn Jarir, as the preferable ones being more intelligible. Nothing is to be presumed there nor is anything attributed to Suleman that is unintelligent or unbecoming of him. The reply given by Ibn Kathir to Ibn Jarir's objection is no more than being too far fetched. There is no reason for a great prophet like Suleman to slaughter horses, some thousands of them, and to say that such action might have been looked upon as laudable in that age is no sensible

¹¹ فاحييت معناه اردت المحبة al Bahr al Muheet vol.7, p.396

Fath ul Bari vol 6 p. 356. Tarikh e Ibn Kathir vol2, p. 25.

argument.¹² Similarly, for Ibn Kathir to say that to recompense Suleman for having slaughtered so many horse in thoughtlessness, Allah subjugated the wind to him, may sound amusing but does not accord with the Qur'an. The incident under consideration is quite separate and is on its own, and is not followed by the slightest of indication to show the subjugation of the wind with being connected with it. Had it been so, in accordance with Qur'anic style, mention would have been found in the same Verses under study that Allah gave him so great a prize as to make the wind subject to him. Instead, the wind's subjugation is presented in connection with another incident related to Suleman being tested. He solicited Allah's forgiveness and at the same time prayed that he be endowed with such sovereignty as should never belong to any other after him and that prayer was answered in the form that jinn and beasts and winds were subjugated to him.¹³

In short, after the incident of *safanatul jiyad*, there is no record to show that Suleman gave up horse-riding, or did not use horses in battles, nor is the subjugation of the wind or jinns mentioned in the connection, nor is the sun mentioned, nor the slaughter of so many horses together as a laudable deed. Therefore, Abdullah ibn Abbas's version is to be preferred and is more understandable.¹⁴

Suleman tested –

In Surah e Sa'd, we have a brief account of Suleman being tested by Allah:

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمَانَ وَأَلْقَيْنَا عَلَى كُرْسِيِّهِ جَسَداً ثُمَّ أَنَابَ () قَالَ رَبِّ
 اغْفِرْ لِي وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكاً لَّا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِي ۗ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
 الْوَهَّابُ () فَسَخَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيحَ تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ رُخَاءً حَيْثُ أَصَابَ ()
 (ص ج ٢٣ ع ٣)

And We verily tried Suleman, and set upon his throne a mere body: then did he repent. He said, My Lord forgive me

¹² In al Bidaya wa al Nihaya Ibn Kathir mentions the number of horses as being ten thousand and twenty thousand.

¹³ Surah e Sa'd.

¹⁴ And according to Hamdani, if *ahbatu* be taken as meaning *arad-tul mahbut-u yhrn an* can be taken as meaning man.

and bestow on me sovereignty such as shall not belong to any after me. Lo! Thou art the bestower! so We made the wind subservient unto him setting fair by his command withersoever he intended. (Sa'd: 34-36)

In these Verses we are not told what the test was to which Allah had subjected him. The only indication is that a body was seen placed on his chair. The Traditions too give us no indication. Commentators have expressed two opinions, one; that we should not jump to any conclusion merely on the basis of conjecture, but simply believe that Allah put Suleman to a test which was concerned with his throne and a body being placed on it, and no more. Then Suleman, like a prophet of high status, turned to Allah, first seeking forgiveness, and then, praying for a unique and peerless governance. Allah accepted both his prayers and commended him and his grandeur.

وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِنْدَنَا لَزُلْفَىٰ وَحُسْنَ مَّآبٍ ()

And he is brought near Us, and for him there is a high station.

This is what Hafiz Imaduddin ibn Kathir and some others believe.

The second opinion is that a solution must be found for eliciting detail so as to remove the doubts. Of these there are only two worth considering, one by Imam Razi, and the other by some other commentators.

The implication of Imam Razi's version is that once Suleman fell seriously ill and became so weak that when he was brought to sit on his throne, he looked as though he had no life left in him. Then, when he recovered, he thanked Allah and as became the dignity of prophets, beseeched forgiveness and expressed his helplessness and solicited the bestowal on him of a peerless sovereignty.¹⁶

According to this commentary by Razi,¹⁷ the word *fatanna* in the Verse Sulayman implies "serious illness", and *alqa e jasad* in *alqayna ala kursi-e-hi, jasada* is Suleman's reclining on his throne like a lifeless body; and *summ anaab* is his recovery. That is, the purpose of the test was to make Suleman understand fully that despite his grandeur, nothing, neither his power, nor his life were under his own control, so that he may, like a great prophet, bow

¹⁶ Tafsir e Kabir, Surah e Sa'd.

¹⁷ Tafsir e Kabir, Surah e Sa'd.

down before Allah, and, expressing humility and beseeching forgiveness, attain yet higher station.

Some scholars say in their commentaries of these Verses that once Suleman thought that he would lie with each one of his wives that night so that a son may be born of each one of them to become a soldier on battlefield, but with such thought he forgot to say, 'If Allah will', *Insha-Allah*.

Allah did not appreciate this lapse by a great prophet, and He falsified Suleman's wish by causing none of his wives to conceive, except one who gave birth to a dead and deformed child which was brought to him when he was sitting on his throne. Suleman realised that this was the result of his having relied on his thinking without subduing it to Allah's will, *Insha Allah*. Immediately then he turned to Allah, sought forgiveness, and solicited the prayer stated in the Qur'an.

Traditionists present the following Tradition from Bukhari and Muslim in support of their contention. The commentators, Abu al Saud and Syed Mahmood Aaloosi adopt the same view.¹⁷

عن ابى هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال قال سليمان بن داود دلا طوفن الليلة على سبعين امرأة تحمل كل امرأة فارسا يجاهد في سبيل الله فقال له صاحبه ان شاء الله فلم يقل ولم تحمل شيئا الا واحدا ساقطا احدى شقيه فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لو قالها هدوا في سبيل الله -

Abu Hurayra reports: The Prophet ﷺ said that one day Suleman b. David said, "Tonight I will go to each one of my seventy wives so that she may give birth to an able-bodied child who will fight in the path of Allah." His minister said, 'Insha-Allah', but Suleman did not repeat the words, with the result that none of his wives conceived, except one who gave birth to a child that had one part of its body missing." The Prophet ﷺ added that if Suleman had said, Insha-Allah, each one of his wives would have given birth to a child for jihad in Allah's path."¹⁸

¹⁷ Rooh ul Ma'ani, V. 26.

¹⁸ Bukhari: Kitab ul Anmbiya.

Evaluation—

But both these commentaries are vague. The first, which Razi supports, is only conjectural and too far-fetched for these Verses. We admit that the near ones of Allah do sometimes fall sick and this may be a cause of their being tested; but for a body to be placed on the throne while Suleman was sitting on it in a state of great weakness, is senseless. All that the Verse indicates is that a body was placed on the throne, and this was related to his being tested. Besides, the word, *anaab too*, in the various places it has been used in the Qur'an, always implies beseeching forgiveness and expressing devotion. To take this word to mean recovering from an illness is unappealing.

Similarly, the commentary by some scholars and adopted by Abu al Saud and Syed Mahmood cannot be one for the Verses under consideration, because wherever this Tradition is recorded in Bukhari and other Tradition Books, not a single word can be found, not the slightest hint, to show that the Prophet ﷺ or Abu Hurayra said that it was a commentary of these Verses. This Tradition tells of an incident that is independently on its own, just as Bukhari tells us of another occurrence in the same chapter. For instance, the Prophet ﷺ said once that during Suleman's time two women were travelling together, each with her nursing baby. On the way, one of the infants was taken away by a wolf. Its mother began quarreling with the other woman, and claimed her baby. When the case came up before David, he decided in favour of the older woman because the infant was in her possession and the younger could produce no evidence in her own behalf.

When the women on their way back passed by Suleman, he inquired of them about their case. After hearing it, he ordered that a knife be brought and the infant be split into two parts, one to be given to each of the two women. The elder woman kept silent, but the other began groaning and yelling, and pleaded that the infant be given whole to the other woman. Then everyone understood that it belonged to the younger woman and the older woman had lied. Consequently, the child was handed over to the younger woman.¹⁹

Just as the Prophet ﷺ has related this story of showing Suleman's wisdom, he has related the other about Suleman and his wives so that if his followers desired blessings in their affairs, they should say "If Allah will", *Insha-Allah* when they speak about them.

It might, perhaps, also be, that when Wahab b. Munabba related the story, he gave the number of Suleman's wives and slave-girls to have been one thousand, but the Prophet ﷺ corrected him and said that the number was sixty,

¹⁹ Bukhari:Kitab ul Anmbiya

or, according to some versions, one hundred, of whom some were betrothed wives and the rest slave-girls.²⁰

The narrative under consideration has been related as having its own value of advice. The commentaries on the Verses have nothing to do with it. Those by Razi and some others solve nothing about Suleman being tested, or the placing of a body on his throne.

Although the Verses tell of the event but cursorily, the lesson conveyed is clear, and this is what the Qur'an always intends. Therefore, we should have faith in the summarily stated event in the Qur'an to derive a lesson and counsel from it. If, however, this does not satisfy the heart, it may be preferable to accept Imam Razi's version.

Besides these commentaries there are many others on the subject, but they do not have the remotest connection with Islamic narratives. They are without doubt a collection of Hebrew myths and garbage. In fact, it is an affront to the word 'narrative' to include them as such.

The sum total of these concoctions is that Allah had given Suleman's throne to Satan's possession because among a number of reasons, one of Suleman's wives named Amina, was an idolatress and used to worship her father's statue. So Allah punished Suleman by depriving him of his throne for the equivalent of the period during which she had worshipped the idol, and his signature-ring fell into his slave-girl Jirada's hands, and through her into Satan's, and Satan enthroned himself in the royal chair and began to rule over the realm. At the end of the period, the ring fell from Satan's finger into a river where a fish swallowed it. The fish happening to be caught was brought before Suleman. And so, when it was carved, the ring returned to his possession, and he began to rule over his realm once again.

There is a somewhat similar story given in Kings 1, Chapter 11 of the Old Testament, and mention is made of Suleman even worshipping as an idolater for the sake of his wives. Even a layman can understand that such stuff ascribed to a great prophet can have nothing to do with Islamic teachings. The Traditionist Ibn Kathir says of these fabled myths:

ذَكَرَ ابْنُ جَرِيرٍ هُوَ ابْنُ حَاتِمٍ وَغَيْرُهُمَا مِنَ الْمَفْسِّرِينَ هَهُنَا
أَثَارًا كَثِيرَةً عَنْ جَمَاعَةٍ مِنَ السَّلَفِ وَأَكْثَرُهَا أَوْ كُلُّهَا مُتَلَقَاةٌ مِنْ

²⁰ Najjar gives yet a third commentary, but we shall not quote it here, as it is nothing but conjecture. It will be found in Qasas ul Anmbiya p. 329

الاسرائيليات وفي كثير منها نكارة شديدة وقد نبهنا على ذلك
في كتابنا التفسير واقتصرنا ههنا على مجرد التلاوة -

Besides Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim, several other commentators have mentioned many things from the ancients, and most, or all, of them have been borrowed from Hebrew lore. Some are extremely objectionable, about which we have sounded a warning, contenting ourselves with what the Qur'an states.²¹

ولكن الظاهر انه انما تلقاه ابن عباس رضى الله عنهما ان صح عنه
من اهل الكتاب وفيهم طائفة لا يعتقدون نبوة سليمان عليه
الصلوة والسلام فالظاهر انهم يكذبون عليه وهذا كان في هذا
السياق منكرات -

But it is evident that if this narrative is proved to be rightly ascribed to Abdullah ibn Abbas, even so he borrowed it from the Scripture people. One of their groups does not look upon Suleman as a prophet. That is why lies have been fabricated for Suleman and unmentionable things are found therein.²²

وقد رويت هذه القصة مطولة عن جماعة من السلف رضى الله
عنهم كسعيد بن المسيب وزيد بن اسلم وجماعة اخرين وكلها
متلقاة من قصص اهل الكتاب -

This long story has been stated as ascribed to a party of the ancients, for instance, it is borrowed from Saeed b. Musayyab and Zayd b. Aslam and one group, but the whole story from beginning to end is taken from the fables of the Scripture peoples.²³

²¹ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya Vol.2 p. 26

²² Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol. 4 p. 24

²³ Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol. 4 p. 24

Besides Ibn Kathir, Imam Razi in his commentary, Ibn Hazm in al Fasl, Qazi Ayaz in Shifa, Shaykh Badruddin Aini in his commentary on Bukhari, Ibn Hayyan in his commentary and other revered scholars have purged Islamic narratives of the filth of the fables surrounding this incident by exposing them as the drollery of the Scripture peoples.

Suleman's army and Valley of the Ants --

It has been shown in the foregoing pages in our discussion on bird-language that Allah had taught Suleman the languages of all animals. In this connection the Qur'an mentions an incident occurring in a valley that was infested with ants.

Once Suleman was marching with an army of jinn, men and animals. In spite of the huge multitude of them, no individual dared to move forward or back against his rank. Because of Suleman's awe, everyone marched in thorough discipline. When they came to the Valley of the Ants, the Ant-King on seeing this huge army called out to the ants to hasten into their holes because Suleman and his retinue hardly knew that ants were swarming the ground in such large numbers and they would be trampled and crushed, and Suleman would scarcely be aware of it.

Suleman laughed at these words and lauded the intelligence of the ant king's advice. The Qur'an says:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا ۖ وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ () وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُدَ ۖ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۗ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ () وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودُهُ ۖ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالنَّاسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ () حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَى وَادِ النَّمْلِ ۖ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسْكِنَكُمْ ۖ لَأَ يَخْطِبَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ ۗ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ () فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّنْ قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ () (نمل ج ١٩ ع ٢)

And We verily gave knowledge unto David and Suleman; and they said: Praise be to Allah Who hath preferred us above many of His believing slaves. And Suleman was

Daud's heir and he said: O people! Lo! We have been taught the language of birds and have been given (abundance) of all things. This surely is evident favour. And there were gathered unto Suleman his armies of the jinn and humankind, and of the birds, and they were set in battle order, till when they reached the Valley of the Ants, an ant exclaimed, O ants! Enter your dwellings lest Suleman and his armies crush you unperceiving. And (Suleman) smiled laughing at her speech, and said, My Lord! Arouse me to be thankful for Thy favour wherewith Thou hast favoured me and my parents, and to do good that shall be pleasing unto Thee, and include me in (the number) of Thy righteous slaves!
(al Namal 15-19)

We have referred to the ant that sounded the command or counsel as king of the ants because, as the ancients and our contemporaries agree, ants and bees have so very disciplined an administration of their own that to call it a state administration would be no exaggeration. Some secular scholars have gone so far as to say that man has devised his administration after that of these two species. However superficial this view might be, it does confirm their regulated order. Therefore, the ant giving the order must be their king or some chief.

Where was or is the Valley of the Ants situated? Although many names have been suggested, most chroniclers believe that it was near Asqalan, as mentioned by Ibn Batuta; or between Bait Hebron and Asqalan, as advanced by Yaqoot. Most scholars believe it to have been in Syria.

Here several other questions are posed. What was the name of the ant that gave the order? To what tribe of ants did it belong? What was their size? Answers have been sought from Hebrew garbage, but they are irrelevant, far-fetched and foolish. The Qur'an and the Prophet's Traditions have nothing to do with them.

For example, Nauf Bakkali says that these ants were the size of wolves²⁴ although the Qur'an states that they were of such insignificant size that one of them had to say that Suleman might crush them and be unaware of having done so.

The Qur'an's purpose by mentioning this event is that when in the receding Verses we were told that Allah had bestowed on David and Suleman the

²⁴ Tarikh e Ibn Kathir vol 2 p.21

understanding of bird language and this was a sign of their eminence, one or two such events should also be stated so as to help the reader entertain no doubts and have certain faith that knowledge given to these two great prophets was not the knowledge common to mundane affairs but a special gift and token or miracle granted to them. Therefore, immediately next the first event to be mentioned is that of the Valley of the Ants; how Suleman was amused on hearing the words of so insignificant a creature, as though he heard human beings talking; and, at the same time, we are told that when Suleman had believed both with visual faith and inner faith (*ayn ul yaqeen* and *haq ul yaqeen*), he, as becomes the dignity of great prophets, gave thanks to Allah for this, His great blessing of a token.

The importance of this event may also be appreciated by the fact that Allah has named the Surah in which it is mentioned as *Namal* or *Ants*.

Ahmed Zaki Pasha of Egypt has written in one of his papers on this subject that here *namal* implies a throng of human-beings; that is, they lived in a valley infested with ants and they were afraid lest Suleman's armies should trample them. But this commentary of Zaki is not of one of the Verses, it is rather a contradiction of them. How can human beings be taken to be like ants when it is categorically stated that if they were crushed, Suleman would remain quite unaware of how their lives fared, *wa hum la yasharuna*.

The Qur'anic context condemns such interpretations as irrelevant and obsolete. The Verses are rendered unconnected with the knowledge so emphatically mentioned in the first Verse; nor is there anything so amusing in human-beings seeking self-preservation as should make Suleman astonished and amused, nor would this be an event of such importance as would make his gratitude so prominently stressed as stated in the next Verse. Besides, if this were a matter of human-beings, what was the need for the Qur'an to complicate its statement in metaphorical language and unnecessarily create doubts, instead of using direct, plain words. If there were both human beings and animals in very large numbers gathered anywhere, it might be said in the idiom of some languages that they sprawled about like ants. But when there is no mention of human beings nor their numbers considered, and the description begins with the words that "an ant called out," it cannot be implied in any language that a throng of human beings is intended.

In today's age of learning when research on animal languages by experts recognises that nature has endowed animals with their own peculiar languages, and special vocabulary is being prepared for them, although they fall far too short of human speech; and when philosophical debates are being held on animal intelligence, and the variety and rudiments of animal languages are

being projected as proven facts,²⁵ it is astonishing that it should be looked upon as an impossibility that transcending earthly cause and result, Allah endowed the knowledge of animal languages on some of his chosen devotees. Baseless interpretations and even distortions are being attempted to that end.

It is stated in some narratives that once in Suleman's time there was no rainfall, and expecting a famine, Suleman with his followers, came out in a field to pray for rains. On the way he saw an ant, its fore-legs raised and looking up to the skies and praying, "Allah! We too are one of Thy creatures and are dependent on Thy blessings: Do not destroy us by depriving us of rain." Suleman told his men to return, saying, "The prayer of one animal has done our work. Now without our prayers there will be rain."

This narrative has been transmitted by Ibn Asakir and Ibn Abi Hatim in both *mauqoof* and *ma'arooif* styles.²⁶ But to ascribe it to the Prophet ﷺ is not correct. There is another Tradition from him stating that once an ant bit a prophet and he in anger directed that the ant hole from which it had come out be burnt. Immediately, divine inspiration (*wahi*) rebuked him, saying, why did you direct the burning up of the entire ant hole? There were so many other and innocent ants in it; you might destroy only one, the erring ant."²⁷

In the Verses under study, we have Suleman's words,

"*We have been given everything*" The meaning is clear: Allah Ta'la has so honoured us by his munificence and blessings that we have everything of this world.

Suleman and the Queen of Sheba—

In Surah e Namal the Qur'an has related an incident about the Queen of Sheba at some length. It is very interesting to read, and important from the point of view of the lessons it conveys.

As, besides human beings, jinn and beasts thronged Suleman's grand and peerless court, always ready according to their status and assigned services, to carry out his orders without hesitation. Once, as he looked across his courtiers, he found the hoopoe missing, and inquiring where it might be, threatened to punish it, by slaughtering it, unless it produced a reasonable excuse for its absence. A little later, the hoopoe appeared. On being asked it

²⁵ Da'iratul Muaarif al Bastani vol. 7 pp.287-288

²⁶ Tarikh e Ibn Kathir vol. 2 p. 2 and Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol.3, p. 359

²⁷ Muslim Kitab ul Anmbiya

said that, it had brought news, of which the king knew nothing, and that there was in Yemen a queen whom Allah had endowed with everything and her throne was exquisite. And that the queen and her subjects adored the sun, being misled by Satan and they did not worship the One True Allah, Lord of the universe.

Suleman said he would find out the truth, "If your account is correct, he said, take this letter of mine and deliver it to her and wait for her comments."

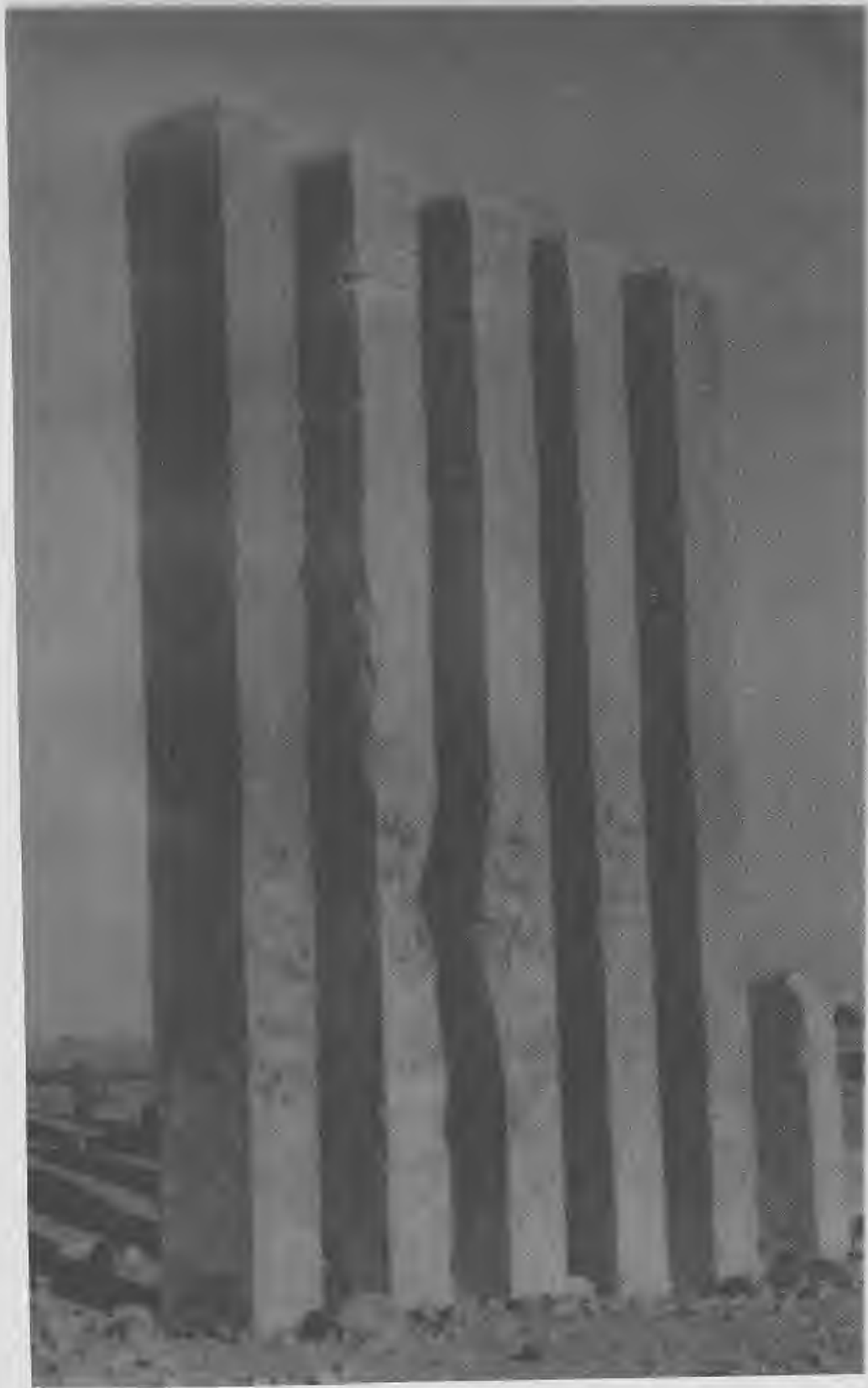
When the letter dropped in the queen's lap, and she read it, she told her courtiers about it and read it out to them: "This letter", she said, "begins with the words *In the name of Allah the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful* and is from Suleman. 'You should not be arrogant', or be rebellious against us but come to us, obedient as a Muslim."

The queen said, O my courtiers, you know that I do nothing without consulting you; now tell me what I should do in this case," The courtiers said, "There is no need to get overawed, because we are a powerful people of war. As for counsel, you decide and we shall obey accordingly."

The queen said, "There is no doubt that we are powerful and great, but in Suleman's case, we should do nothing in haste. First, we should estimate his power because the extraordinary manner in which this message has come to us, indicates that we should think well before taking any step. I should like to send some messengers with valuable gifts for him. In this way they will be able to form an opinion about his power, and they will also find out what he wants from us. If he really possesses great power and is a mighty king, our fighting him will be useless, because it is the tradition of tyrannical kings that when they enter a land as victors, they destroy the cities, and dishonour the respectable citizens. Why then should we invite destruction for nothing?"

When the queen's emissaries arrived in Suleman's court, he said, "You have misunderstood my message. Do you think you can persuade me with these gifts which in your estimate are priceless? You can see for yourself that in comparison with what Allah on High has bestowed on me, your priceless gifts are as nothing. So take your gifts back and tell your queen that if she does not obey my message, I shall march on you with a great army which you will not be able to resist; and then I will humble you and destroy your land."

The emissaries came back and related all they had seen of Suleman's pomp and power, and that he ruled not only over human beings, but jinn and animals too were obedient to him. When the queen heard all this she decided that it would be futile to fight Suleman and invite destruction. It would be best, she thought, to respond pleasantly to his call.



The Qur'an tells us that the Queen of Saba and her people were "worshipping the sun besides Allah" before she followed Sulayman. The information on the inscriptions verify this fact and indicate that they were worshipping the sun and the moon in their temples, one of which is seen above.

On the pillars, there are inscriptions written in the Sabaean language.



Today, the famous dam of the Sabaeans are again turned into irrigation premises.



The Ma'rib Dam seen above in ruins was one of the most important works of the Sabaeans people. This dam collapsed because of the flood of Arim mentioned in the Qur'an and all the cultivated areas were swamped. Its territory destroyed with the collapsing of the dam, the Sabaeans state lost its economic strength in a very short time and was soon completely demolished.

In Suleman's message there were also the words, "Come to me as a Muslim". Because the queen was ignorant of Suleman's religion, she took the word 'muslimeen' in its literal meaning, (one who surrenders), and thought that Suleman too, like any despotic king, wanted her to surrender to him, and, acknowledging his suzerainty become subordinate to him. With this in mind she began her journey to Suleman.

Suleman was apprised by inspiration that the queen had set out to present herself before him. He then told his courtiers that he wanted this queen's throne to be brought to him before she arrived. One stalwart jinn said that he would bring the throne before the court retired; and that he was trustworthy and would not betray the trust.

Hearing this claim of the stalwart jinn, one of Suleman's ministers said that he could bring it in a twinkle of the eyes. As Suleman turned his face, he saw the queen's throne before him and said: "This is of my Lord's mercy to me. He tries me whether I am thankful to him or ungrateful. And the truth is that whoever is thankful profits only his own self, and he who disobeys, Allah is unconcerned with his disobedience, and its evil reaction recoils on himself." After thanking Allah, Suleman ordered that slight alterations be made to the throne so that when the queen saw the throne, he may find out whether she discerned facts or not.

In due course of time, the queen arrived, and as she stepped into the court, Suleman asked her if the throne was like her own. The intelligent queen answered, "It is very like my own", implying that as a whole it appeared to be her throne, but because of slight differences in the appearance, she could not be definite that it belonged to her.

The queen added, "I already had knowledge of your incomparable power and, therefore, I have come in utter obedience to you; and now this amazing matter about the throne is another manifestation of your great power, and one more reason for my submission. So once more we express our fidelity and obedience to you.

The queen thought that with these words she had completed her response to Suleman's words *kunna muslimeen*. Her idolatrous life and sun-worship prevented her from comprehending the depth of Suleman's message and turn to right guidance.

Suleman now adopted another way to prod her intelligence. With the help of jinns he had a magnificent crystal palace built which for its shining glass, height and unusual art was peerless. In the front courtyard was a big pool of water filled to the brim, and there was a floor paved with pieces of glass and crystal looking as though flowing with clear water.

The queen was asked to put up in the royal palace. When she walked up to the front of it she found what she thought was water flowing, so she pulled up her dress to set foot in it. Suleman said this was not necessary because it was not water but glass, the whole palace and its lovely floor were built of glass.

This was a blow to the queen's intelligence which roused her sense of discernment. She realised that whatever had been happening all along was not of a king's power to show, but to impress on her that this great power of Suleman and miraculous doings was an endowment of some Being who was sole Lord of the sun and moon, nay, of the entire universe; and for this reason Suleman did not desire her submission for himself but to invite her to submission and obedience of that Super Being.

And as these thoughts came to the queen she like an abashed and repentent human being exclaimed her acknowledgement before the Divine Being, "O Lord! I Have wronged myself very greatly, by worshipping another beside Thee, but now I believe with Suleman in Allah the One and Only, Who is Lord of all the universe." And in this way, fulfilling the purpose of *antooni musulimeen* ---- "come to me as a Muslim" --- she accepted Islam as her religion.

The Qur'an has related this story with amazing brevity, such that the basic objective, namely reminding, may be retained, and also the necessary parts of the story, as well in further proof of Suleman being granted the knowledge of bird language mentioned in the first Verse, and this narrative is the second part of it beginning with his conversation with the hoopoe:

وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَأَ أَرَى الْهُدَىٰ هُدًىٰ مِمَّنْ الْغَائِبِينَ ()
 لَأَعَذَّبَنَّهٗ، عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَأَأَذِّبَنَّهٗ، أَوْلِيَاءَ تَبَتَّىٰ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ()
 فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطْتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطُ بِهِ وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَإٍ
 بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ () إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا
 عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ () وَجَدْتُهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
 وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَاءَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ()
 أَلَا يَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ الْخَبَاءَ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ
 مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ () اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ()
 قَالَ سَنَنْظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ () اذْهَبْ بِكِتَابِي

هَذَا فَالْقِيَّةِ إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ فَانظُرْ مَا ذَايَرُ جَعُونَ () قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا
الْمَلُوكُ إِنِّي أُلْقِي إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابَ كَرِيمٍ () إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمَانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ () أَلَا تَعْلَمُونَ عَلِيٌّ وَآتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ () قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا
الْمَلُوكُ أَفْتُونِي فِي أَمْرِي ۚ مَا كُنْتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْرًا حَتَّى تَشْهَدُونِ () قَالُوا
نَحْنُ أَوْلُو الْقُوَّةِ وَأَوْلُو آبَائِكَ شَدِيدٍ () وَالْأَمْرُ إِلَيْكِ فَانظُرِي مَاذَا تَأْمُرِينَ
() قَالَتْ إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَا
أَذَلَّةً ۚ وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ () وَإِنِّي مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِمْ بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَاظِرَةٌ بِمِ
يَرْجِعُ الْمُرْسَلُونَ () فَلَمَّا جَاءَ سُلَيْمَانَ قَالَ أَتُمِدُّونَنِ بِمَالٍ ۚ فَمَا آتَى
اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا آتَاكُمْ ۚ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بِهَدِيَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ () إِرْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمْ
فَلَنَّا يَنُنَّهُمْ بِجُنُودٍ لَّا قِبَلَ لَهُمْ بِهَا وَلَنُخْرِجَنَّهُمْ مِنْهَا أَذِلَّةً وَهُمْ
صَاغِرُونَ () قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلُوكُ أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَن يَأْتُونِي
مُسْلِمِينَ () قَالَ عِفْرِيْتُ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَن تَقُومَ مِن
مَّقَامِكَ ۚ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ () قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ
الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَن يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ ۚ فَلَمَّا رَأَاهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا
عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي ۚ أَشْكُرَ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ ۚ وَمَنْ
شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ () قَالَ
نَكَرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنظُرُ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَّا يَهْتَدُونَ ()
فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَكَذَا عَرْشُكِ ۖ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ ۚ وَأُوْتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ () وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّهَا
كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ () قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ ۚ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ
حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً وَكَشَفَتْ عَنْ سَاقِهَا ۚ قَالَ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُّمَرَّدٌ مِّنَ
قَوَارِيرَ ۚ قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ()

And he sought among the birds, and said, How it that I see not the hoopoe or is he among the absent? I verily will punish him with hard punishment, I verily will slay him, or he verily shall bring me a plain excuse.

But he was not long in coming; and he said, I have found out (a thing) that thou apprehendest not; and I come from Sheba with sure tidings.

Lo! I found a woman ruling over them, and she hath been given abundance of all things, and hers is a mighty throne.

I found her and her people worshipping the sun instead of Allah, and Satan maketh their works fair seeming unto them and debarreth them from the way (of Truth), so they go not aright.

So that they worship not Allah Who bringeth forth the hidden in the heavens and the earth and knoweth what we hide and what we proclaim.

Allah, there is no God save Him, Lord of the tremendous Throne.

(Suleman) said, we shall see whether thou speakest truth or whether thou art of the liars, go unto them with this my letter and throw it down unto them, then turn away and see what answer they return.

(The queen of Sheba) said (when she received the letter): O chieftains. Lo! there hath been thrown unto me a noble letter. Lo! it is from Suleman, and lo! it is in the name of Allah the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful. Exalt not yourself before me, but come unto me as those who surrender.

She said, O chieftains! pronounce for me in my case. I decide no case till you are present with.

They said, we are lords of might and lords of great prowess, but it is for thee to command. So consider what thou wilt command.

She said, Lo! when kings enter a township they ruin it and make the honour of its people shame. Thus will they do.

But lo! I am going to send a present unto them and see with what (answer) the messengers return.

So when (the envoy) came unto Suleman, (the king) said, What! would ye help me with wealth? But that which Allah hath given me is better than that which He hath given you. Nay, it is ye (and not I) who exult in your gift!

Return unto them, we verily shall come unto them with hosts that they cannot resist, and we shall drive them out from thence with shame and they will be abased.

He said, O chiefs! which of you will bring me her throne before they come unto me surrendering?

A stalwart of the jinns said, I will bring it thee before thou canst rise from thy place. Lo! I am strong and trusty for such work.

One with whom was knowledge of the Scripture said, I will bring it thee before thy gaze returneth unto thee. And when he saw it set in his presence, he said, this is of the bounty of my Lord that He may try me whether I give thanks or am ungrateful. Whosoever giveth thanks, he only giveth thanks for (the good of) his own soul; and whosoever is ungrateful is ungrateful only to his soul's hurt, for, lo! my Lord is Absolute in independence, Bountiful.

He said, disguise her throne from her that we may see whether she will go aright or be of those not rightly guided.

So when she came, it was said (unto her), is thy throne like this? She said (it is) as though it were the very one. And (Suleman said), we were given the knowledge before her, and we had surrendered to Allah.

And all that she was wont to worship instead of Allah hindered her, for she came of disbelieving folk.

It was said unto her, enter the hall. And when she saw it she deemed it a pool, and bared her legs. (Suleman) said, Lo! it is a hall, made smooth of glass. She said, my Lord! Lo! I have wronged myself, and I surrender with Suleman unto Allah, Lord of the worlds! (al Namal 20 - 44)

meaning is without authority and quite wrong by any Arabic lexicon. It is acknowledged that innovations are not permitted in dictionaries, which are subject to the usage of those whose mother tongue the language happens to be. Arabs never use the word *tayr*, literally or metaphorically as meaning 'an army'. In all contexts the word always implies a bird or birds.

The Qur'an was revealed in a living language, known as *lisan ul Arabi-un mobin*, not an obsolete, language of which any word may be given a meaning of one's own fancy. Should anyone wish to deny the incident of the Elephant People, *Ashab e Feal*, he may take the words *tayran ababeel* to imply an inauspicious portent; or someone take *hudhud* (hoopoe) to mean an army, even though this may be wholly incorrect in Arabic lexicon and idiom. It is surprising that Maulana Syed Suleiman Nadwi, while rejecting Maulvi Chiragh Ali's version should want to change the problem into one to be understood by common reasoning and write:

"If the talking of birds still give rise to misgivings, assume that like pigeons, a trained hoopoe too can be a message carrier, and by its speech is meant the letter in its possession, as the Qur'an itself tells us that Suleman gave it his letter and dispatched it to the queen of Sheba.³³

The surprise is that when the Qur'an so clearly defines the incidents of the language of birds, the Ants and the hoopoe as special gifts and blessings for Suleman, and the Qur'anic context so stresses the hoopoe conversing with Suleman, yet Syed Nadwi admits the senseless denial of naturalists who confine proven events to their poor knowledge and deny the knowledge conveyed by Divine inspiration, and he makes interpretations opposed to the stated objective of the Qur'an.

Besides, the mere mention of anything in the Old Testament or Hebrew narratives is no proof its being wrong or absurd.

Only if the Qur'an or Traditions logically prove it to be wrong or if there is anything opposed to the manifest principles of the Qur'an, commonly acknowledged, or if they mention details not found in the Qur'an or Traditions and are also absurd, then, no doubt, such Hebrew narratives deserve to be rejected. But when an event is clearly stated in the Qur'an, and the Old Testament and Hebrew lore also quote it or something very like it, it is not permissible to hold them as incorrect simply because they are also mentioned in the Hebrew scripture and narratives, and then open a new chapter of baseless interpretations. Instead, the events mentioned in Hebrew literature

³³ Ard ul Qur'an Vol. 1 p. 268 *

may be advanced in support of the clear and emphasised events stated in the Qur'an and Traditions.

Some commentators refer to a Tradition transmitted by Abdullah b. Abbas that the hoopoe was a water diviner for Suleman. Wherever the army needed water, the hoopoe would apprise it of the place and depth where it could be found, and Suleman would employ the jinn to draw it out.³⁴

Throne of the queen of Sheba —

We have already heard the praises of the queen's throne from the hoopoe, and in connection with it Suleman's miracle too is mentioned in the Qur'an that on his command the throne was brought from her country to his court. In this connection we should bear in mind some points mentioned in the Qur'an:

1) The gifts which had been sent by the queen at the hands of her envoys were refused by Suleman.

أَتَمِدُّونَنِي بِمَالٍ فَمَا آتَنِي اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا آتَكُم بَلْ أَنتُمْ بِهَدِيَّتِكُمْ
تَفْرَحُونَ () إِرْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمْ
(الآية)

2) When Suleman was apprised that the queen had set out to meet him, he asked his courtiers which of them could bring her throne before she arrived.

قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُوا أَئِكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ()

3) First a stalwart jinn spoke up saying that he would bring it before the king dismissed his court and that he was worthy of trust for the valuables of the throne.

قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَّقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي
عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ ()

4) Suleman's minister said that he could bring it in the twinkling of an eye.

أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ

5) When Suleman turned his gaze to another side, he saw the throne placed there. Seeing it he thanked Allah and said, "This great blessing on me is to see

³⁴ Tarikh e Ibn Kathir, vol 2, p.21

whether I thank Allah or am thankless”.

فَلَمَّا رَأَهُ مُسْتَقَرًّا عِنْدَهُ، قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَتْلُوَنِيءَ
أَشْكُرًا أَمْ أَكْفُرًا

6) Suleman now ordered that its appearance may be altered.

قَالَ نَكِّرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنْظُرًا تَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ
الَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ

7) When at the end of her journey, the queen arrived in Suleman's court, she was asked whether her throne was like the one she now saw, and she gave a wise answer, that it was very like her throne.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَكَذَا عَرْشُكَ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ

Keeping in view the sequence of the details, it will be noted that the Qur'an is speaking about a throne, news of which had already been given by the hoopoe before any message had been sent. It was not made for Suleman, and was not included among the gifts that were sent to him through the emissaries and were also returned.

Suleman apprised of her coming wished to have her throne brought to him before her arrival. Bringing it was an unusual procedure. First a stalwart jinn offers to bring it before the court disperses, but a trusted one of Suleman says that he could bring it in the twinkling of the eye. Seeing this great marvel bestowed by Allah, Suleman holds it to be Allah's glorious blessing. Then he orders that the throne's appearance be changed, and now after all this, the queen arrives in Suleman's court. There were questions and answers about the throne, but no mention is made in the Qur'an about any gift of the queen.

Throughout these details, there is neither any comment, nor anything distorted to suit one's opinions. Therefore, this story of the throne is without the least doubt a marvel and a token of Suleman being a prophet, both *nabi* and *rasool*.

Interpretations made to the contrary are all incorrect because they have been made either overlooking some very clear wording of the Qur'an, as Maulana Syed Suleiman Nadwi has done, or taking wrong advantage of some words the entire facts have been distorted.

Readers will discover for themselves how far Nadwi's interpretation tallies with the words of the Qur'an.

“Our opinion”, he says, “is that the queen of Sheba had some special gift prepared for presentation to Suleman, and since it was a gift, she must have brought it with her to Syria. The proof of the gift is that the Qur’an mentions some gifts in the account of the first delegation from Sheba. Sheba’s gifts are also mentioned in Nabiyeem.

It is stated in the Qur’an that one of the courtiers who was acquainted with the knowledge of the book, said that he could bring the throne within the flashing of the eyes. Just as this idiom in our language means doing a thing with quickness, it means the same thing in Arabic.

قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ

Some scholars have taken this very meaning of the words; it is ignorance of language idiom to think that any work can be done literally, within the twinkling of the eye.³⁵

How we wish that Syed Sahab had also mentioned the names of the great scholars, who, he says, have attached the same meaning to these words! No one, of course, denies that the words *qabla an yartadda ilayka tarafuka* mean swiftness and speed. Our difference is that Syed Sahab would like to confine the meaning of these words to the idiom, while the Qur’an here transcends these limits and wishes to express them as a portent of Allah. That is why preference is given to them over the one who said *an taquma min maqamika*. Otherwise this comparison is rendered futile. Since Suleman’s intention was that the throne should be brought to him before the queen’s arrival and the offer made by him who was *qawi un ameen* would have been quite sufficient, nor would this remain so important an issue as to give rise to a controversy, nor would the Qur’an lay stress on these details.

In this connection, Najjar says, “The special manner in which Suleman had the throne brought him at the hands of some one who had knowledge of the book has not yet been comprehended by modern knowledge. This incident about the throne is proved by the sequential order of the Qur’anic verses which are irrefutable. The argument of those who say that a chart of Suleman’s state stores was kept by her and she knew in which of the stores the throne was kept, is quite hollow. When there is evidence of supernatural miracles, denying them is useless. The Creator of the laws of nature has the authority and power to disrupt them. Why, then, should it not be admitted that for such miraculous happenings, special laws are operative, besides the

³⁵ Ard ul Qur’an vol. 1 pp. 269-270

common laws but they have not yet been discovered by ordinary "knowledge". With them only those holy souls are familiar at whose hands Allah manifests the miracles.³⁶

وَاللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ

Commentators say that the name of the man of whom the Qur'an tells us that he "possessed knowledge of the book" was Asif b. Barkia,³⁷ and that he was a specially trusted one of Suleman and his calligrapher and a minister. This is quoted from Abdullah ibn Abbas. Some scholars give other names³⁸ but this is the most preferable of them.

Commentators also discuss whether Asif b. Barkia was a human-being or jinn. Zahhak, Qatada and Mujahid say that he was a human being.³⁹

The third question in connection with this individual is, 'what is the meaning of "knowledge of the book" in the phrase, *indahu ilmin min al kitab*? Wahab b. Munabba, Mujahid and Muhammed b. Ishaq believe that he was acquainted with *ism e azam*, "the Great Name" Some latter day scholars hold that impied is Suleman's official register. That is, being in charge of the register he knew in which part of the stores the throne was safely kept. Syed Suleman says:

"In Arabic, the word '*kitab*' often means a 'letter' The Qur'an uses the word in two places. The Verse, therefore, means that the man who knew the contents of the letter, said, 'I will bring the throne straight away. The queen had brought a chair or throne with her as a gift.'⁴⁰

Both these versions are wrong, contradicting the words of the Qur'an. The conversation relevant to the occasion took place before the queen's arrival. It is surprising that this very clear point is overlooked under pressure of the devotees of naturalism.

³⁶ Qasas ul Anmbiya.

³⁷ Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol.3 p 364; and Tarikh e Kathir vol. 2 p.23

³⁸ Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol.3 p 364; and Tarikh e Kathir vol. 2 p.23

³⁹ Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol.3 p 364; and Tarikh e Kathir vol. 2 p.23

⁴⁰ Ard ul Qur'an vol. 1 p270.

Similarly, the register too is unconnected with the episode. The queen with her entourage had not yet even arrived in Suleman's court. Even if it be assumed that Suleman was apprised of the queen's coming not through Divine inspiration but by the hoopoe or a forerunner of the queen carrying an epistle from her, nowhere is it written in the Qur'an or any Hebrew literature that the gift of her throne arrived in Suleman's court ahead of her.

All this is nowhere. The correct version is that the man, whether named Asaf or not, was a very close companion of Suleman. Just as Abu Bakr was prominent in the company of the Prophet ﷺ, so was this man in Suleman's company, and he had because of such company acquired deep knowledge of the Scriptures, the Torah and the Psalms, the Divine Names and Attributes, the Mysteries and Truths. So when a stalwart from among the jinns offered to bring the queen's throne, and though the time he said he would take was sufficient for Suleman's purpose, Suleman preferred that this task should not be accomplished by a stalwart jinn, *afriyat-ul min al jinn-e*, but at the hands of some special devotee of Allah, so that by his prophetic attention the thing may come before the queen as a miracle and portent. Appreciating this desire of Suleman, Asaf offered his own service, saying that the time he would take would be much less than that taken by the jinn because he had faith that the blessings of Suleman's favour would fulfil this miracle. And because every miracle is Allah's own work which He displays at the hands of His prophet (as already explained in these pages), Suleman seeing this token of the truthfulness and glory of his being a prophet, thanked Allah in these words:

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

Haza min fazl e Rabbi

“All this is by the blessings of my Lord.”

That is, ‘whatever may take place has nothing to do with my effort or that of Asaf, but is entirely of Allah's blessing that this work has been accomplished.’

Sheba Embrasses Islam

The story of Suleman and the queen of Sheba comes to an end with her conversion to Islam on observing the awesome greatness of his personality as a prophet.

وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“And I surrender with Suleman to the Lord of the Worlds”.

Throughout the events this was Suleman's sole purpose, which he had expressed in his first message, but at that time she had been unable to understand it.

It has been a topic of consideration among thinkers that though Suleman's calling the queen to his court is appreciable, what connection has this purpose with sending for her throne in that manner that he did and that special occurrence which followed her stepping on to a glass floor?

And then they themselves answer the question that she should believe that the purpose of calling her was not worldly greed or increase of wealth and dominion, but that there was some higher objective, and that she should understand that those two events were above imperial pomp and power and were tokens of the truth of his being a prophet. For this reason, the commentators have taken the words *kunna muslimeen* to mean faith, that is, the queen accepted Islam in its true meaning.

Although we agree with this, one objection does arise to the logic; namely, that if it is correct that having said, *kunna muslimeen*, she accepted Islam, what should be the meaning of the two phrases in the next Verses: *wa saddaha ma kanat ta'budu min doon il Lah-e innaha kanat min qaumin kafireen*. "She had been kept away from the faith by her worshipping objects other than Allah. She was from among the disbelieving folk."

Qalat Rabbi inni zalamtu nafsi wa aslamtu ma'a Suleimana lil-Lahi Rab il alameen.

It was after having been impressed by the incident at the glass palace that she said, "So far I have wronged myself (by idolatry) and now I believe in Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!"

It seems from these two phrases that she did not become a Muslim, a believer, at the time she said, *kunna muslimeen* but later, after she had been impressed by other events, she announced her becoming a Muslim, though both events took place in Suleman's court. Thus, Mujahid Saced and Ibn Jarir accept this objection and comment that the two sentences beginning *ootinal ilma upto qaumin kafireen* were spoken by Suleman, so that the Verse should mean that Suleman said, "We knew before she arrived that she was from among the polytheists while we are Muslims and sun worship has accustomed her to idolatry and prevented her from worshipping the One and Only True Allah".

Ibn Kathir quoting this version of Mujahid says that this is the preferable account because the queen had not yet become a Muslim, but became a Muslim after the incident of *sarrahu mumarradun min qawarir*. And, therefore, *kunna muslimeen* cannot be her words.

But there is a great grammatical error in this commentary, a disarrangement of the pronouns. When the queen is the speaker of the words *qalat ka-annahu hua*, and after her there is no mention of Suleman, how can the words *wa ootinal ilma min qabliha wa kunna muslimeen* which are attached to the previous phrase be those of Suleman? And if it be said that between the two sentences "Suleman said" should be assumed, the contention is without reason. Assumptions are unnecessary when correct commentary can be made without disruptive antecedents.

In order that defects may not remain therein and the meaning of the events and their logic may also be clear, the commentary by Shaykh ul Hind borrowing from Syed Hussain Ahmed Madni should do well.⁴¹ He says:

"The message Suleman sent through the hoopoe contained the words *wa atooni muslimeen* giving the queen a clear invitation to Islam but she could not grasp the meaning of these words because she was unfamiliar with the Unity of Allah and Islam. So when after the words, "come to me" she read *wa atooni muslimeen*, she understood, after the manner of imperial correspondence that Suleman as a potentate and powerful despot wished to make her submit to him. That is why after consulting her courtiers she adopted the way that she did to find out the facts of the situation. Then when she found that Suleman's power was above that of kings and emperors, she decided that it would not be wise to confront him in war and there was safety in submitting to his ultimatum. Then she set off for Syria. When Suleman was apprised that she was on the way to present herself before him, he thought that some subtle way should be adopted which would oblige her to admit on her own that sun worship was wrong and the true and straight path was to worship Allah the One and the Only.

The religion of the people of Sheba was sun-worship. Their philosophy was that the power of all good and evil belonged to the stars and since the sun was the biggest of them, therefore, it should be worshipped. Suleman wished to convey to her that over all things in the universe, big or small, were under the authority of One Truth and that was the Lord of the Universe, and sun and moon and stars were His creation and manifestations of His power.

The greatest wandering off the path is that leaving Truth, one begins to worship His manifestations because they have concrete form, though such manifest forms are only an argument for Truth and His Being, and not by themselves the Truth.

⁴¹ Maulana Mahmood Hassan Deobandi

This is why change, existence and non-existence, rising and setting and unreliableness are inseparable qualities of the manifestations, while Truth, the One and Only transcends all manner of changes.

It was in this strain of thought that Suleman had the queen's throne brought to him so as to give a related example to her showing that proof of his contention was her own throne. She should think that this throne represented her power and rule and for that reason was called 'the imperial throne'. But no sooner she had left her realm, this representation was rendered worthless, and what was till yesterday an emblem of her power today lay in his court; and even here with its changed appearance was giving a lesson of its unreliableness and impermanence.

That this was Suleman's intention is shown by his saying, when he commanded changes in the appearance of the throne, *nanzur tahtadi um takuno min al-lazin la yahtadoon*, "We want to do this in order to see whether impressed by it she accepts guidance or remains astray." By "guidance" it is Islam that is meant here, not coming to the correctness of things as generally implied.

By his manner of speech Suleman showed the queen that his awe and majesty were not due to pomp and power and imperial glory and rule, but behind it was that power of Allah Subhana-Hu wa Ta'la which transcends the might of emperors, and by the name of Divine tokens is attached to the awe and status of prophets.

At the same time, he also made it clear to her by his peculiar manner, that the sun-worship of Shebaites was the path of error, worshipping the outward instead of the Truth, the mortal instead of the immortal, of the resultant ignoring the Original, of the needy instead of the Independent, of the created instead of the Creator. The straight and right path was to look upon the Truth, the One and the Only Allah, as the Owner of Blessings of good and evil and to worship Him and none else.

But because the people of Sheba had for centuries believed in worshipping others besides Allah, the queen was unable to appreciate the delicate difference, and her intelligence could not recognise the Truth. All she could gather from the episode of the throne was that by this amazing way Suleman wishes to impress her with his great pomp and power in order to make her subservient to him. Accordingly, the queen replied that even if Suleman had not resorted to such demonstration, she had learnt of his great power and grandeur and had already surrendered to him. After this reply, Allah explained the reason for her lack of understanding, namely, that centuries of sun worship still kept her away from accepting Islam and she remained an unbeliever.

These are the only two points which are stated in the Verses without requiring explanation.

قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ وَأَوْتَيْنَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ () وَصَدَّهَا
مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ()

After this Suleman displayed another token, more clear and emphatic. This was the episode of the glass-palace. The queen mistaking the shiny floor for water lifted up her dress to step on it, she was told that it was not water but the reflection of glass. It was now that the queen realised the true purpose of the demonstrations. Her intelligence now fathomed the truth that just as she had mistaken reflections for something else, similarly, she and her folk were wrong about their worship of the sun. The sun was but one of the manifestations of the Truth, the One Lord Allah and what could be greater wrong than to worship the manifested instead of the Manifester. Now she understood the meaning of the words of that first epistle, *wa aatooni muslimeen*, "come to me as a Muslim." The moment this thought came to her, she exclaimed:

رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ -

"I have wronged myself and I surrender with Suleman to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!"

In this commentary by Shaykh ul Hind there is no grammatical violence done to the Verses, and there is no necessity for deletion or rearrangement of the phraseology, while Suleman's grandeur and his invitation as a prophet and his words and his awe and power are fully vindicated.

An example of the word 'Islam' meaning obedience and surrender is to be found in that Verse of Surah e Hujrat which was revealed on the occasion of the nomads claiming to have converted to Islam: *Qalat il Aaraab amanna; qul lum tu-minoo wa lakin qooloo aslamna*.

"The nomads say we believe. Tell them, do not say, 'we believe' but that 'we have surrendered'. The difference between the word Islam in *kunna muslimeen* as meaning obedience and surrender and Islam in *aslamtu ma'a Suleimana lil-Lahi Rab il alameen* as meaning the religion Islam, is shown in the Verses themselves. Before the words of the previous phrase the queen made no statement showing her aversion to idolatry, and her acceptance of Divine Unity. That is why even after those her words, Allah tells us that sun-worship kept her away from Islam, and she was among the unbelievers; but in her later words, she expressly submitted that her Islam was not of its literal

meaning, but the religion (deen) of Islam --- submission not to Suleman but to Allah the Lord of the Worlds. For this reason, probably, in her first submission, thinking of her subjects and the courtiers whom she consulted about her submission, she used the plural, but accepting Islam as a religion was based on her personal faith. she, therefore, expressed herself as an individual, although at that time according to the normal custom, a king's religion automatically became the accepted religion of the subjects, and, presumably, later the queen's subjects too accepted Islam.

However, this commentary is preferable in all respects.

Queen of Sheba in the Old Testament –

The meeting of the queen of Sheba and Suleman is mentioned in the Old Testament also: In Kings 1 Ch. 10 verses 1-10 we have :

“Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Suleman concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices, and very much gold and precious stones; and when she came to Suleman she told him all that was in her mind. And Suleman answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king which he could not explain to her. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Suleman, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings which he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her.

“And she said to the king, “The report was true which I heard in my own land of your affairs and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it, and behold, the half was not told me; your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report which I heard. Happy are your wives! Happy are these your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.....” (Kings 1, Ch. 10, Verses 1 - 9)

Although the queen's conversion to Islam is not mentioned in the Old Testament, it appears from the last words that she had come to believe in the Allah of Israel, for which reason she speaks of Him with such faith.

But there is a prominent difference between the Qur'an and the Old Testament; namely from the Qur'an's statement it appears that Suleman's attitude towards the queen was that of a prophet of awe and status. Every word shows a missionary invitation and prophetic grandeur, while the account

given in the Old Testament shows nothing but imperial grandeur and power. This is the result of the erroneous belief of the Children of Israel that Suleman was king only and not a prophet.

The Qur'an, side by side of correcting beliefs and deeds, also corrects the interpolations and changes introduced by the Israelis. Here, too, it presents the correct facts and indicates the errors which are to be found in the older Scriptures.

Suleman's marriage with the queen of Sheba --

Commentary books tell us that after the queen Bilqis's acceptance of Islam, Suleman married her but permitted her to return to her country, and now and then, he used to meet her.⁴² But neither the Qur'an nor the verified Traditions mention the event.

Hebrew lore--

Biographical literature contains many far-fetched details about Bilqis, the Sheba queen besides those mentioned in these pages. They are, from beginning to end, borrowed from Hebrew sources. Ibn Kathir's comment on them may be summarised as follows:

"In this connection there is a strange tradition from Ibn Abbas which is transmitted by Abu Bakr b. Sheebah verified by Ibn ul Saaib. Ibn Sheebah remarks that this is a very happy episode, but I say that he should not have said so. Rather the tradition should be rejected and Ata Ibn ul Saaib doubts that the former ascribes it to Ibn Abbas. It is more likely that such narratives are borrowed from the writings of the Scripture peoples. Details of the event are in the style which Ka'b Ahbar and Wahab b. Munabbah used to relate Israeli stories after copying them from Hebrew books. May Allah overlook their mistakes that they used to narrate before this ummah, all manner of things, true and untrue, distorted and interpolated, although Allah Subhana-Hu wa Ta'la has made us unconcerned with all such useless matters, and has given us a Qur'an which in its statement of true facts, the benefit of a single objective, clarity of meaning, eloquence and lucidity, is far above them."⁴³

⁴² Tarikh e Ibn Kathir, vol.2 p. 24

⁴³ Tafsir Ibn e Kathir vol. 3 pp. 325-326

Time and again it has been mentioned that such and such narrative is correct and such from Hebrew sources. We might clarify what is meant by Hebrew narrative.

The narratives of the Children of Israel centre around the Torah. In Hebrew language, Torah implies shariah. Therefore, it is, applicable on the Genesis, the Exodus, the Leviticus, the Numbers, the Deuteronomy. Besides the Torah, there is the Book of the Prophets (nabi-yeem, which in Hebrew is plural of the word nabi). This is a collection of the teachings of the prophets, hymns, Hebrew literature and brief history of these people, noteworthy among which are Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Ruth and Kings.

Today the Prophets is regarded as part of the Torah. The third part is Tarkum, in Arabic meaning a translation.

Hebrew scholars have written their commentaries on the Torah and Prophets in Aramaic, and they claim that they heard these commentaries directly from the prophets. The fourth part is Madrash, the equivalent of which in Islam is Hadith or Traditions. The fifth part is Talmud, the Jewish fiqah. Apart from all this are stories which generation after generation the Jews transmit as though they too were religious literature.

All these categories are what is called Israiliyat or Hebrew literature. Some of these found their way among Muslims and became famous after the Jewish ulema converted to Islam. From the beginning some scholars have engaged themselves in the sacred task of purging Muslim Traditions and warning Muslims, to give credence only to such narratives as support the statements of the Qur'an and Islamic Traditions.

Unique greatness of Suleman's first letter--

Literateurs say that the letter which Suleman dispatched to the queen of Sheba inviting her to Islam is the most unique among all letters ever written until this day. The claim is not based on religious faith but that on such a delicate problem so brief a letter has been written, but with the purpose in view so pointedly clear, highly eloquent and lucid and so dignified in style, pleasant, sweet, yet powerful and heart-appealing. In short, there exists no letter in the library of any great man throughout history comparable with this letter. Allah's providence, ownership and creative power, announcement of prophetic message of Truth, expression of His absolute rule, and personal introduction are enclosed in these few lines.

Read the contents of the letter and consider it in the light of this description and see us whether in its words and meaning it is a marvel or not.

إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمَانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ () أَلَا تَعْلَمُونَ عَلَيَّ
وَأَتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ()

"This letter is from Suleman and it begins with the words In the name of Allah the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful. Do not try to overawe me, but come to me as one of the Muslimeen (of those who surrender to Allah).

Suleman and Israeli slander—

It has been clearly shown in the preceding pages that Israelis used to pervert and interpolate their Scriptures, making changes to suit their mundane convenience. With David and Suleman they have gone so far as to deny that they were prophets at all and have slandered them with all manner of calumny. One of the several accusations is that Suleman was a magician and was king on the strength of his magic and had thus subordinated humans and jinns, and birds and beasts to himself.

The Qur'an rejects all such allegations and projects with appropriate light the greatness of Suleman as a prophet. It tells us that Suleman is purged of the filth of magic. The truth is that in his time the devils taught magic to jinns and humans in order to mislead them. The Israelis threw aside their true Scriptures, and began to look upon the magic as their law. They went on to learn and teach more and more of it. When from among the Jews there arose men of truth and advised them that denying the truth they had strayed off the right path, and they should mend their ways, the devils deceived them and they began to say that this knowledge had been taught by Suleman himself, and on its basis he was lord of so great a kingdom. Thus the Israelis persisted in their error, spoke lies and calumniated Suleman.

Suddi says that this error had crept in during Suleman's life, and it was currently said that the jinn possessed knowledge of the unseen. When Suleman came to know of this he collected such writings on magic and buried them under his throne so that neither jinn nor man may dare approach the place. At the same time he made a proclamation that whosoever practised magic, or believed that jinns possessed knowledge of the unseen would be executed. But when Suleman died, the jinns took out the buried pile of writings, and insinuated among the people that this knowledge of magic was from Suleman who ruled over humans and jinns, birds and beasts because of it. In this way the practice of magic again became current among the Israelis.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Tafsir Ibn e Kathir vol. 1 p. 134.

The Qur'an presents this historical episode to the effect that although the Jews believed that the Prophet ﷺ was a true prophet of Allah, his advent being foretold in several of their holy Books, yet they denied his being a prophet, and, casting aside their scriptures, followed satan just as they followed magic in Suleman's time; and right to this day, accuse him of practising magic. The Qur'an clarifies all this in these words:

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ ۖ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَانَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (۱) وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيْطَانُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ ۖ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَكِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ ۖ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ الْمَلَائِكَةِ بِبَابِلَ هَرُوتَ وَمَا رُوتَ ۖ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَنِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۖ قَتَلْتَهُمَا مِنْهُمَا مَن يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ ۖ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ ۖ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ۖ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ أَنفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ (۲)

(بقره ج ۱ ع ۱۲)

And when there cometh unto them a messenger from Allah confirming that which they possess, a party of them who have received the Scripture fling the Scripture of Allah behind their backs as if they knew not. And they follow that which the devils falsely related against Suleman. Suleman disbelieved not but the devils disbelieved, teaching mankind magic and that which was revealed to the two angels, in Babel, Harut and Marut. Nor did they (the two angels) teach it to any one, till they had said, we are only a temptation, therefore, disbelieve not (in the guidance of Allah). And from these two (angels) people learn that by which they cause division between man and wife, but they injure thereby no one save by Allah's leave. And they learn that which harmeth them and profiteth them not. And, surely they do know that he who trafficeth therein will have no (happy) portion in the Hereafter, and, surely, evil is the price for which they sell their souls, if they but knew.

(al Baqar Vs. 101,102)

Commentators have different views on the Verses quoted above due to the Qur'an being silent about the details other than the three stated, because they are not relevant to its purpose. Away from the normal commentaries, we have preferred another deduced from Allama Muhammed Anwar Shah's *Ayat-un min Aayatul-Lah*, summarised here as follows:

When after Suleman had passed away, and the devils taught the Israeli's magic, there was no prophet to guide them, in line with the miraculous process which had been coming down for centuries. Then two angels Harut and Marut were sent down for their guidance and support. They taught them knowledge of the Torah, Divine names and attributes. This was knowledge, purged and distinguished, far above magic, and an Israeli could easily understand the difference that the one was magic and the other the higher knowledge. When teaching, the angels would also point out to the Israelis that now having seen the difference between the true and the false with their own eyes, should they shelve aside the Scripture of Allah and continue to pursue magic, they would, indeed, be unbelievers because Allah's mercy had been fully shown and they no longer had any excuse for doing wrong. That is, the angels were a trial for them to see whether even after their teaching, the Israelis continued with magic and obeyed satan or followed the more powerful Command of Truth, the Book of Allah.

But the natural crookedness of the Children of Israel asserted itself and they began misusing the higher knowledge for their unholy forbidden desires. For instance, creating unwarranted differences between husband and wife, and so forth, and in this way, mixing up good with evil to make it look like a marvel. Our righteous ulema tell us that mixing up good with evil or using the implications of holy words for impermissible deeds also assumes the form of magical action, and is, therefore, forbidden and is unbelief, *kufr*.⁴⁵

According to this commentary by Shah Saheb, the word *ma*⁴⁶ in the phrase *wa ma unzila-alal malakeen* is not a negative but the pronoun 'who', because between *sahar* and *ma unzila* there is a conjunction, the first noun then, according to Arabic grammar, indicating separateness. Thus in the Verse, magic is quite separate a knowledge brought into being by the devils and knowledge brought by the angels quite another used for permissible purposes. Therefore, magic here is not ascribable to the angels.

⁴⁵ Mauza ul Furqan-Shah Abdul Qadir: reference Verse: فَكَبَّضْتَ كَيْدَهُمْ مِنْ أَيْدِي الرُّسُلِ.
Kitab un Nubuwaat of Shaykh ul Islam Hafiz Ibn Teemiah.

⁴⁶ Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol. 1

The commentary by virtue of the meaning, the context, the facts and events is comprehensive and we prefer it to the others.

Besides this commentary there is one by the well-known grammarian Firra. He regards *ma* in *ma unzila* as a negative, and explains the Verse as meaning that the knowledge of magic spread among the Children of Israel through the devils and their belief that it was Suleman's knowledge was erroneous. And it is also wrong that the two angels Harut and Marut came down in Babylon and taught them magic, warning them at the same time that they had been sent as a trial for them. If they wished to learn magic the angels would teach it but the learners would become unbelievers, which, they advised, the people should not be. If the people insisted, they would teach them the magic that causes differences between husband and wife.

This whole story is wrong as no such thing ever happened.

Yet another commentary is by Imam Qurtubi which Ibn Jarir considers as being superior. Here too *ma* in *ma unzila* is looked upon as a negative, and Harut and Marut are alternatives to "devils". The implication is that it is wrong that angels came down from the skies with knowledge of magic; but that the devils taught magic and Harut and Marut were two of them, who when they taught the Israelis magic would rebukingly also tell them that if they learnt magic they would become unbelievers, kafir. But such was the vicious temperament of the Israelis that they would still learn the magic for causing disruption between husband and wife, throwing aside the Scriptures.

In our opinion these two commentaries are no better than the other common ones, the latter, taking *ma* to mean 'which', or 'who', and implying that two angels Harut and Marut were sent down to Babylon as a trial for the Children of Israel by Allah to teach them magic and, at the same time, warn them that if they learnt magic, they would become unbelievers. All this causes unnecessary confusion and equates magic with *ma unzila*, 'coming down from the skies.'

Besides such commentaries, there are strange stories quoted in the commentary books, ascribed to the Companions and a supposedly well-known Tradition in connection with these Verses, although, in fact, they are neither from the Companions nor a Tradition from Hadithe, but stories related by Ka'b Ahbar and other Hebrew scholars and should be called Hebrew garbage.

The gist of them is that once two angels, Harut and Marut, made fun of human sins before Allah, saying that these were strange creatures who, in spite of His many blessings, persisted in violating His commands. Allah did not like this sarcasm and told them that if they were confined to the environment of the earth, they too would do the same things. The angels asserted their holiness, on account of which they were sent down to the earth.

After some time they saw a very beautiful woman named Zahra, and both angels fell in love with her desiring her bodily. She told them that until they drank strong drinks, committed murder and prostrated before idols, they would not get her. In their infatuation, they did all this to please her. Zahra once in close company, asked how they ascended to the heavens, and they taught her the *Ism e Azam* or the Highest Name. Zahra recited the Name and went up to the heavens, but the two angels got themselves involved in Allah's wrath and were imprisoned in one of the water wells of Babel. Now, if anyone wished to learn magic from them, he could call out to them, and they would first warn him not to do so lest he became an unbeliever, but, if he persisted, they would teach him and then ask him if he saw anything. The learner would answer that he saw a man with a very lighted up face going on a horse. They would tell him that this was his Faith which had now been separated from him, and the man was now a magician. These two angels will be kept hanging up side down in the well until Doomsday!

The absurdity of this story is self-evident. True research scholars warn about such ridiculous narratives, keeping Islamic traditions pure and unblemished. Ibn Kathir discussing the first account stated above, concludes:

واقرب ما يكون فى هذا انه من رواية عبدالله بن عمر عن كعب
الاحبار لاعن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فدار الحديث ورجع الى
نقل كعب الاحبار عن كتب بنى اسرائيل -

"In this connection, the preferable opinion is that the Tradition found in Musnad e Ahmed traced to the Prophet ﷺ is really one copied by Abdullah b. Umar from one of Ka'b Ahbar's Hebrew stories. To ascribe it to the Prophet ﷺ is definitely not right. "(After investigation) the conclusion is that the Tradition stated to be well-known is proved to be a story from Ka'b Ahbar which he narrated after reading Hebrew books. "47

After this, the gist of the evaluation made by analysing all references to the Companions and to other sources in this connection is as follows:

"This story of Harut and Marut and their love for Zahra has been quoted by a good many successors of the Companions, such as Mujahid, Suddi, Hassan Basri, Qatada, Abul-Aaliya, Zahri, Rabi' b. Anas, Maqatil, Ibn Habban, and others; and

copying from them, the earlier and latter day writers have broadcasted them. But the fact is that all of them have been borrowed from Hebrew tales. No such record is to be found in the entire collection of the Traditions of the Prophet ﷺ (whose august greatness is that he never said anything of his own desire but only what was Divinely inspired in him). The Qur'an retains the event as abstract and gives no detail or comment. Therefore, our faith is that whatever the Qur'an states in this connection is the truth, and its explanation and details are with Allah and are left to His care. Allah knows the hidden and the manifest."⁴⁸

The purpose of the Qur'an by stating the episode is only to show that the allegations of magic made against Suleman were wholly baseless and sheer calumny. Suleman was pure of such taint. The Jews followed the Satan and ignored their Scriptures. The Qur'an goes no further, therefore it is sufficient for us to have faith in so much, and leaving the details and explanations aside is the best we may do. Such details have nothing to do with religion and the *millat*. Several authorities such as Shaykh ul Islam Ibn Teemiah and Abu Hayyan Andalusi agree with Ibn Kathir in this regard.⁴⁹

Suleman's death—

The event of Suleman's death as described by the Qur'an in Surah e Saba may be summarised in these words that a large company of jinns was occupied in some grand construction work when he breathed his last. But the jinns knew nothing about it until he fell down due to his staff on which he inclined while standing being disbalanced by worms having eaten into it.

Then the jinns realised that he had passed away some time ago and they said that they regretted that they did not come to know of it. Would that they had knowledge of the unseen, for then they would not have had to suffer so much which they had to because of the awe and fear of Suleman.

فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَا دَلَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَوْتِهِ إِلَّا دَابَّةُ الْأَرْضِ تَأْكُلُ
مِنْ سَاتِهِ ۗ فَلَمَّا خِرَّ تَبَيَّتِ الْجِنُّ أَنْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوا
فِي الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ ()
(سباء ج ٢٢ ع ٢)

⁴⁸ Translated from Tafsir e Ibn Kathir vol. 1. p.141

⁴⁹ al Bahr ul Muheet vol.1

And when We decreed death for him, nothing showed his death to them save a creeping creature of the earth, which gnawed away his staff. And when he fell, the jinns saw clearly how, if they had known the unseen, they would not have continued in despised toil. (Saba)

It is said that the jinns were apprised of Suleman's death when the building works had been completed. They felt sorry for themselves that if only they could see the unseen, they would have been at liberty long ago.

The purpose of the Qur'an here is both to give news of Suleman's death and, at the same time, point out to the stupidity of the Children of Israel, that if the jinn possessed knowledge of the hidden and unseen, they would never have suffered the labour of building Jerusalem or any other city. After the manner in which the jinns came to know of Suleman's death, the devils (jinn) had to confess that their claim to insight in the unseen had proved quite wrong.

This is all that the Qur'an tells us about Suleman's death and no more, nor was more necessary so much being sufficient for its mission. Therefore, we too should not be curious about further details: how long did Suleman stand supported by his staff in what posture or condition did he keep standing? did both humans and jinn have knowledge of it? or only those jinns remained ignorant who were working at some distance from Jerusalem? and so forth.

It is written in the Old Testament that when the death-angel came to Suleman and gave him the message that only a few hours were left for him to live, Suleman apprehending that the jinn might leave the work under construction incomplete, ordered the immediate building of a glass hujra without any door to it and he went in and stood reclining on his staff in worship, and the death-angel executed his duty.

Suleman kept standing on his legs for a whole year, during which the jinns kept themselves occupied in the construction work. When it was completed, insects began eating into Suleman's staff until it could no longer support his weight and he fell down. Now the jinns realised that Suleman was dead and they regretted their ignorance.⁵⁰

This and other such narratives have been borrowed from Hebrew literature and included in our commentary books, but the research scholars have warned what they are worth.

The Torah alluding to Suleman's death, tells us:

"And the time that Suleman reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. And Suleman slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David, his father, and Rehoboam, his son reigned in his stead." (*Kings I, Ch. 11, V. 42-43*)

Qazi Baydawi quotes, probably, from the Torah that Suleman was only thirteen when his father David passed away, and he began ruling; and he was fifty-three when he died.

LESSONS --

The order in which the events of Suleman's life and their detail have been stated, themselves sound the lessons for men and women of vision and lift the veils off important facts but some of them are specially worth reflecting on.

1) Past nations have distorted the true religion of Allah according to their desires. One such distortion has been to slander the true prophets and ascribe shameless, obscene things to them. Foremost among such slanderers are the Children of Israel. They acknowledge one revered personage as a prophet, nabi and rasool, and yet, without the least, hesitation, impute immodest and immoral deeds to them. For instance, the story of the prophet Lot and his daughters. Some great and eminent prophets they deny as being prophets and impute false allegations and slanders against them with great pride, for instance, David and Suleman.

The Qur'an projects true religion in the light of truth which Islam is. It purges the prophets it has mentioned of the filth the children of Israel have tarnished them with and thus lifts the veil off their satanic nature.

2) It should be a great lesson that we could not keep ourselves away from the erroneous ways the Children of Israel adopted, and which the Qur'an with brilliant logic showed to be repudiated. Leaving the lighted path of the Qur'an we introduced Hebrew lore into Islamic literature.

The Prophet ﷺ once only said that it is not impermissible to quote from the people of the Scripture those things that do not contradict the Qur'an. But ignoring the basic condition that they must not be in contradiction of the Qur'an, we began not only to copy all manner of Israeli narratives but made them an argument for interpreting the Qur'an, presenting them as such in many places for commentary. The result was that, on the one hand, non Muslims showed them to be Islamic traditions and making them colourful, began assailing the true teachings of Islam; misusing them as excuses for their nefarious purposes; and, on the other, the agnostic and atheistic minded among Muslims, exploited these narratives to deny the true faith of Islam, the proven Traditions and facts (miracles) derived from firm belief, that comes from

Divine inspiration, the events of Judgment Day, and heaven and hell; and, saying,----although there may be present for such an event the Qur'an or Tradition of the Prophet ﷺ --- that our ulema, according to their habit, have borrowed all this, from the Israelis.

The commentary writings on the Qur'an by Sir Syed, Maulvi Syed Muhammed Hasan Amrohi, Maulvi Chiragh Ali, Ghulam Ahmed Qadiani and Muhammed Ali Lahori are derived on this basis.

Both these paths are wrong. It is wrong to give place to Israeli narratives in Islam, specially, in commentaries of the Qur'an, a fatal step, however sincere the motive might be, and, similarly, to use the borrowed narrative as an excuse for inviting to atheism, and deny the Qur'anic injunctions and true Traditions; or, in the name of commentary, to corrupt the meaning so as to destroy Islamic teachings and distort Islam.

The straight path is that which the researchers after truth have adopted, that, on the one hand, they look upon the injunctions of the Qur'an as their inviolable faith and atheistic interpretations as distortion of them and purging Islam of Hebrew lore project Islam in its true light.

3) There is always a clear distinction between ruling prophets and secular kings. In the former, there is always prominently fear of the Divine Being in every nook and corner of life, justice and invitation and service of created beings. If, sometimes, they do show commanding power, there is no arrogance or pride but, instead, hostility for the sake of the Divine. Their anger is not for personal profit but for elevation of the Word of Allah Subhana-Hu wa Ta'la. The sacred lives of Joseph, Daud and Suleman are prominent examples. In every phase of Suleman's life, will be found personal dignity, or party precedence, display of superiority, tyranny over the downtrodden appear as the bases.

For an example, first take Pharaoh's declaration: *"I am the providential lord of you all and none besides me."* and then reflect on Suleman's words, *"Show not your precedence above me, but come to me as a Muslim, (as one who surrenders)."*

In both, commanding power is expressed, but in Pharaoh's declaration plainly visible are rebellion against the Divine Being, tyranny over Allah's creatures, and claim to Divinity; but in Suleman's address, there is a show of dignity, not for personal arrogance but for a high mission, calling to Allah's Word, and for repugnance of idolatry and for invitation to Divine Unity. This is the difference between true khilafat and secular governance, a difference that should always be retained through the heritage of the prophets.

4) He who dedicates his whole life specifically to Allah, Allah too subordinates the universe to him and, then, no step of his can be taken against Allah's will. Now, when such an individual displays works that come about by means above the normal, the short sighted do not take the trouble to see that the person who has effected them is merged in Allah's will. Therefore, the hand of Allah's limitless power is on his head. Yet they weigh those actions (miracles) in the balance of the general laws of nature and deny them. This, doubtless, is the path of error, and the correct, lighted path is that which the ulema of Islam have always presented in the light of the Qur'an and authentic Traditions.

Briefly, things always keep happening in contradiction of the normal laws of nature, therefore to deny them is to deny the obvious, because the Creator of the laws of nature and of the laws of human nature has the right to suspend any of the boundless laws. Rather, it seems that from the very beginning such processes of nature have been at work as are special to the usual, and because mundane knowledge does not extend to the frontiers of its sphere and is unable to fathom or discover them, we, due to our limited understanding, think that such supernatural marvels break the natural laws. But that is not so, their action too is linked to human nature. The difference is of one being normal and the other extra-normal, being common and being special, not of breaking normal laws. Allah reveals the knowledge of this division in visible shape, for example miracles, to those holy personages through whom they are displayed.

5) The worst of satanic insinuations is that which creates hatred or enmity between husband and wife. It is the worst because it often leads to such consequences as lies, slander, abusive language, immorality, obscenity and even murder. This is the reason why such action is loved by satan. We have in a Tradition:

“The Prophet ﷺ said that early in the morning satan establishes his throne on water and dispatches his minions all around the earth. Of them he who is the more mischief-mongering gains the greater nearness to him. When one of them returns to report his achievement of the day, for instance, to say that he clung to so and so until he had made him speak something foul, satan gives no praise for such deeds, holding them to be ordinary. Then a devil comes along and announces that he had caused serious disagreement between a certain husband and wife. On hearing this satan immediately embraces this devil congratulating him on his having done something really great!”⁵¹

This magic of the devils among jinns and humans takes place by way of such insinuations and media as create suspicion, ill-feeling and harsh language between the two of them. This gradually goes on to mutual hatred and animosity and separation.

We seek refuge in Allah from all such deeds!



HAZRAT AYUB (Job) عليه السلام

The Qur'an mentions the prophet Ayub's name in four Surahs: al Nisa, al Ana'm, al Anbiya, and Sa'ad. In al Nisa and al An'am only by name in a list of some other prophets,

وَعِيسَىٰ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ
(نساء)

And Jesus and Ayub and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon.

(al Nisa)

وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ

(انعام)

And among his descendants were David and Solomon, and Ayub and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. (al An'am)

And with cursory detail in al Anbiya and Sa'ad telling us that once a time of great tribulation and test befell him; troubles came from all sides, but without a word of complaint, he bore them all with patience and thanksgiving. Then Allah on High covered him with His mercies and dispelling the clouds of suffering, showered many a blessing on him. It seems appropriate, therefore, to throw some historical light on him so that we may be introduced befittingly to a personality whom the Qur'an praises for patience and thanksgiving to Allah, and whose life it upholds to be blessed, an example of moral loftiness.

There can be only two authoritative sources for studying Ayub as a person; the Old Testament and those excerpts which have been copied from ancient history by Arab chroniclers and historians of Islam. And if some foreign references are also included, sufficient light can be obtained.

The earliest evidence we have is from the Book of his name included in the Old Testament. This contains several useful details about his sacred life.

The Old Testament tells us that Ayub was an inhabitant of Uz.

"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Ayub; and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God, and turned away from evil."

Secondly, that Sabceans and Chaldeans plundered his flock of sheep and cattle. This indicates that he was a contemporary of the times when the power of these people was at its zenith.

Besides these two references, we come across another name, Ubab in the Old Testament and some history books, which may be helpful in our research. Some researchers think that Ayub and Ubab are names of the same man. In Hebrew Ayub is called Adab, which in Arabic is Ayub. Though these three names may be of the same person, his personality still requires to be investigated.

According to the Old Testament, the name Ubab belongs to two other persons, one of Banu Yaqtan and the other of Banu Edom. The time of Ubab of Yaqtan lineage is earlier than that of Ibrahim, and five generations up to Noah: Ubab b. Yaqtan b. Eir b. Salah b. Arfaksad b. Sam b. Noah². Ubab of Banu Edom comes much later but before Musa.

It has been mentioned in the chapter on Isaac that Edom was the title of Isaac's son Esau who was older than Jacob. He had left Canaan and gone to live with his uncle Ismail in Hejaz where he married his daughter Mahalath³ or Bashima (Basima) and settled down in that part of Arabia which comprises its extreme frontier this side, to the south-west of Syria and Palestine. From here the mountain range Sa'eir stretches from Amman towards the south up to Hadramaut.⁴

Esau's descendants remained in power for several centuries, commencing, according to historians, from 1700 BC. When the Israelites under Moses migrated from Egypt the Banu Edom ruled over Sha-eer (Sa'eir). We have in the Old Testament⁵:

"Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. Thus says your brother Israel. You know the adversity that has befallen us..... And they journeyed from Kadesh, and the people of Israel, the whole congregation, came to mount Hor. And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor on the border of the land of Edom;....."

² Genesis. Ch. 10 verses 22-24

³ Genesis. Ch. 28 verse 9.

⁴ Da'iratul Muaarif al Bastani Vol. 2

⁵ Numbers Ch. 20 versè 14

It appears from the list given in the Old Testament that before Saul, whose dominion extended to Edom, and was established in 1000 BC, there had been eight rulers, of whom the second was Yubab son of Zareh.

The question now is that if Jebob and Ayub (Ayub and Yubab) are names of one and the same person, then of which of the two others can this be applicable?

There are two opinions.

Abdul Kalam writes that Ayub was of the lineage of Banu Yaqtan and belonged to Arab-Aariba, and, therefore, a contemporary of Ayub or Abraham, or, at least, of Isaac and Jacob.

*"First, most researchers on Torah believe that Ayub was an Arab, and the Book of his name in the Old Testament was originally written in Arabic and Moses had it done into Hebrew. In this Book we are told that Ayub lived in Uz and the Sabeans plundered his cattle. This also supports the contention, as the Genesis and Chronicles tell us, that Uz was the son of Aram son of Sam son of Noah, and it is unanimously admitted that the Aramis were among the first groups of Arab i Ariba."*⁶

The Arab chronicler Ibn Asakir also supports this view that Ayub lived somewhere near Abraham's time, a contemporary of Lot and was a follower of Abraham's religion.

Najjar Misri goes further to say that Ayub lived a hundred years before Abraham.

As against both these opinions, Syed Suleiman says that Ayub was of the Banu Edom and lived somewhere between 1000 BC and 700 BC. We have in his Ard ul Quran:

"That Ayub was an Edom Arab is proved by the Book of his name in the Old Testament."

"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Ayub and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil....."

"In the Torah, Uz is the name of two men; one in the very old times, Uz b. Iram b. Sam b. Noah. (Genesis 29-36).

⁶ Fath ul Bari Vol-6 p. 326.

⁷ Qasas ul Anmbiya p. 415.

According to the peoples of the Scripture, the Second Uz is implied. One great proof that Uz was an Arab of Edom is that the habitations of the friends of Ayub, as mentioned in the Book Ayub are Teman, Shuuha and Namritan

(2-11). About the first, it is fully established that it was a well-known city of the dominion of Edom. (Genesis 35, 36)

“To determine the age is also easy because Kaldan (Ayub 1-17) and Saba (Ayub 10-15) are mentioned together. Saba was at its zenith from 1000 to 700 BC; therefore, Ayub’s time should be fixed somewhere during this period.

It is strange that both these writers present the Sabeans and Chaldeans (Babylonians) as contemporaries, but draw different conclusions and pronounce verdicts against each of the two.

Syed Sahab is supported by the well-known chronicler Yaqoobi, who says:

يوباب هو ايوب بن زارح الصديق

Jebob (Yubab) is Ayub (Job) son of Zareh.

We conclude that Jebob is Ayub, and it is preferable to hold that he was not of the lineage of Yaqtan but of Edom. However, Syed Sahab’s opinion about the period is not correct. His placing Ayub’s time between 1000 and 700 BC is not based on research. His time is somewhere between Isaac, Jacob and Moses, and should be looked for between 1500 and 1300 BC. Our research is logical and based on certain principles.

1) First, that the Book Ayub is dated to pre-Moses time, and Moses had it translated into Hebrew; In the Torah collection the most ancient document is Ayub’s Book.

2) Those chroniclers who hold Ayub to be of Edom’s lineage do not provide more than two links between Edom (*Esau or Ees*); that is, Ayub b. Zerah (*Zareh*), b. Moose (*Uz*) b. Esau (*Eesu*).

3) When these chroniclers refer to Ayub’s maternal lineage they begin with Lot’s daughter, and through the male links up to Joseph’s daughters, and no later. For instance Ibn Asakir says that Ayub was the son of Lot’s daughter; and Qazi Baydawi that he was the son of Leah, Jacob’s daughter or Makher d. Eisha b. Joseph or Rehmat d. Ephraim, b. Joseph.

4) Ayub’s genealogy can be seen as correct even without reference to the genealogy of Uz given by Syed Sahab Jebob (Ayub) B. Zareh b. Uz. B. Desan/Wisan b. B. Esau b. Issac. Although only one name here is more than the list usually given by the chroniclers, this cannot justify the post-dating of the time of after Moses and between 1000 BC and 700 BC. The first of the estimates or arguments stated above is very strong, because authorities on the

Torah have decided in the light of history that the Book Ayub was written before Moses. The second and third estimates may be debatable because of the names, but there can be no doubt. That this is no coincidence. It is based on facts that both the Torah and the historical references in respect of the genealogy agree that Ayub was the maternal grandson of Joseph or Lot. The fourth estimate also establishes that Ayub's time was before Moses, somewhere between 1500 BC to 1300 BC. Probably, Imam Bukhari's research also led him to the same conclusion because in the order he has stated the names of the prophets in his Chapter al Anmbiyah, he mentions Ayub after Joseph but before Moses.

Removing a misunderstanding—

The Torah and Arab chroniclers are at some variance in respect of Ayub's genealogy, but further research shows that this is not significant or basic, but brought about by changes of spelling of the names when transferred from one language to another. Uz in Torah and Mos in Arabic chronicles are the same name; and similarly Zareh in Torah and Zerah in Arab chronicles are the same. But the placing of Mos or Amos between Ayub and Zirah (Zareh) is not correct. Hafiz ibn Hajar writes that some writers have, in their genealogy, identified Ayub as Rom b. Eis, of Banu Rom, that is, but this is entirely baseless.

Ayub and Hebrew and Christian Scholars—

After proper research, it should be borne well in mind that there are great differences between Jewish and Christian Scholars about Ayub. Some — Rabi Hamani Dez, Michaelus, Ismiller, Istiyan — say that Ayub is a fictitious name and all anecdotes about him are mere figments of imagination. The Book Ayub, that is, is an ancient document but it is all a fable. On the other side, Kant Entel and some others hold that Ayub is very much a historical figure, and to describe the Book of his name as false is itself false!

But after identifying the personality, there remain great differences between them and Arab chroniclers in respect of fixing Ayub's period.

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>What they say</i>
01.	Bustani	100 years before Abraham
02.	Ibn Asakir	Near about Abraham's time
03.	Kant	Contemporary of Jacob
04.	Entel	Contemporary of Moses
05.	Tibri	After Shuayb's time
06.	x	Contemporary of Solomon

07.	Ibn Khishma	After Solomon
08.	Ibn Ishaq	Israeli but time not known
09.	x	Contemporary of Bakht Nasar
10.	x	Contemporary Qadata period of Bani Israel
11.	x	Contemporary of Ardsher of Iran

In short, all agree that Ayub was an Arab; the Book Ayub is an ancient document done into Hebrew from Arabic; Ayub is of Edom's lineage; and his period is somewhere between Jacob and Moses.

Ayub in the Quran—

After the light thrown on Ayub as stated above we should consider the concise account mentioned in the Qur'an, Surah al Anmbiyah and Surah e Sa'd:

وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ، أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ()
 فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ، فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرٍّ وَأَتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ
 رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِ نَاوِذِكْرَى لِلْعَبِيدِينَ () (انبیاء ج ۱۷ ع ۶)

And Ayub when he cried unto his Lord, (saying), Lo! Adversity afflicteth me, and Thou art the Most merciful of those who show mercy.

Then We heard his prayer and removed that adversity from which he suffered. We gave him his household (which he had lost), and the like thereof along with them, a mercy from Our store, and a remembrance for the worshippers.

(Al Anmbiyah 82)

وَأَذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا أَيُّوبَ - إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ، أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطَانُ بِنُصْبٍ
 وَعَذَابٍ () أُرْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ - هَذَا مُغْتَسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ () وَوَهَبْنَا
 لَهُ، أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا وَذِكْرَى لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ()
 وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْثًا فَاضْرِبْ بِهِ وَلَا تَحْنُثْ - إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا - نِعْمَ
 الْعَبْدُ - إِنَّهُ، أَوَّابٌ () (ص ب ۲۳ ع ۴)

And make mention of Our bandman Ayub when he cried unto his: Lord saying: Lo! The devil doth afflict me with distress and torment.

And it was said unto him, Strike the ground with thy foot. (This spring) is a cool bath and refreshing drink. And We bestowed on him (again) his household, and therewith the like thereof a mercy from us, and a memorial for men of understanding. And (it was said unto him) Take in thy hand a branch, and smite therewith, and break not thine oath. Lo! We found him steadfast; How excellent a slave. Lo! He was ever turning in repentance to his Lord. (Sa'd : 41-44)

All necessary details regarding Ayub have very concisely, and in simple language, lucid and eloquent, the qualities not found in the lengthy discourse of the Book Ayub, been stated in these Verses.

He is a holy man, of the category of prophets, his name is Ayub, and he is also very prosperous in wealth and children. But suddenly he is subjected to trials and tribulations. Sufferings come from all sides. His children die, he loses his wealth and his body is afflicted with wounds and diseases; but he neither complains nor cries; but only says, with supreme patience and thanking to his Creator:

إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطَانُ بِنُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ (ص ٤١)

When he cried unto his: Lord saying: Lo! The devil doth afflict me with distress and torment. (Sa'd 41)

His sense of respect is such that he does not say, "Thou hast afflicted me with all this", because he knows that pain and punishment are from Allah but they appear only through the devil. That is why he says, "The Devil has touched me with pain and suffering", and adds, "My Lord! Afflictions surround me and "Thou art the Most merciful of the merciful". And when he calls, he is heard and accepted. Allah gives him far more than he ever had before, both wealth and children, and makes springs gush forth that he might bathe and recover. And all this happens because Mercy is Allah's great attribute and that people of vision and the obedient may learn a lesson.

And then praising Ayub's patience and devotion Allah says, "And We found him patient, righteous and repentant.

Consider the marvel of these Verse that what is expressed here in a few verses, occupies in the Book Ayub, 42 chapters and several hundred verses.

Some Commentary Facts—

Some facts deduced from the commentary references should be clarified here.

1) Israeli narratives give highly exaggerated accounts of Ayub's physical ailments, some of which are repulsive and looked upon as necessary to keep away from the patient, for instance, boils and sores to such an extent that the body begins to rot and smell offensively.

Some commentators believe that a prophet cannot possibly suffer from diseases which are repulsive to human beings obliging them to keep away because this would negate the purpose of his mission and obstruct guidance. Commentators give two answers: one that Ayub might have suffered from such a disease before he was appointed a prophet, being given the high status after his recovery and passing through tribulations with thankfulness and patience.

Secondly, Israeli narratives are unauthenticated and full of exaggeration. The Qur'an and Muslim Traditions give no such detail. Therefore, no doubt arises, nor any need for controversy.

2) What does, "the devil has touched me", imply? Israeli accounts tell us that to test Ayub, Allah delivered him over to Satan's possession.

Researchers say that these words were spoken by Ayub as a matter of respect, because only good comes from Allah; and what we speak of as being evil is evil relative to us. But if considered from the angle of the collective purpose of the universe, such evil too will have to be admitted as good.

Our lives and the inter-connection of our deeds make somethings 'evil' but in reality they too are good. That is why when good befalls the pious, they consider it to be from Allah, and when evil befalls them, they look upon it as being from their own *self*. The Qur'an conveys this idea:

"مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ
فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ"

These commentators also explain that Ayub's words رَبِّ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ imply that the disease which afflicted him; and the words in Surah e Sa'd, reflect the devil's *nusb*, insinuations, which constantly kept urging him to bewail and be ungrateful to Allah, thus shocking him spiritually by tampering with his patience and steadfastness and causing him greater vexation than his physical ailments.

3) What is meant by the Verse

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُم مَّعَهُمْ

Did Allah give him after his recovery more family and children than those who were destroyed, and gathered around him those who had dispersed? Or that Allah resurrected back to life those who had lost their lives and added more to them?

Ibn Kathir, borrowing from Hasan and Qatada believes in the latter⁸, and so also does Shah Abdul Qadir⁹. But Imam Razi and Ibn Habban are inclined to the former.

The Verse may equally be interpreted to either.

وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْثًا فَاصْرُبْ بِهِ وَلَا تُحْنُتْ

The Qur'an and Traditions have no detail to give. But commentators say that during Ayub's illness when there was no one but his loyal wife to attend on him, she was always at his side to comfort him. But once it so happened that some words escaped her lips which offended his patience and might have made him plaintive. He could not tolerate this and swore that he would thrash her with a hundred stripes. When his period of tribulation was over and he had recovered, he thought of his oath. On one side, there was the wife's loyalty, sympathy and services and, on the other, the oath. Ayub was in a great predicament, but Allah inspired him to take some broomsticks and smite her with them so that the oath might be fulfilled.

5) In Surah e Sa'd are the words:

أَرْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ هَذَا مُغْتَسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ

Ibn Kathir comments:

"Allah on high ordered Ayub to rise and strike the earth with his foot. As he did this, Allah caused a spring to gush out water. Ayub bathed himself with it and all his bodily ailments disappeared. He struck the earth again and a second spring gushed out of which he drank and the

⁸ Ibn Kathir Surah e Sa'd.

⁹ Mauda ul Qur'an Surah e Sa'd

remnant of his ailments which were internal was also cleansed. Thus recovering completely, he offered thanks to Allah.¹⁰

Hafiz Ibn Hajar borrowing from Ibn Jarir and Qatada, also has a similar comment to give.¹¹

Was there one spring or two? This is immaterial. Allah adopted the natural method of curing Ayub. Even today He has given mineral springs the waters of which by bathing or drinking reduce many ailments or cure them entirely. The only difference is that for Ayub the springs were made to gush forth as a miracle, while usually they are found in the natural course.

Imam Bukhari quotes a Tradition that the Prophet ﷺ said that once Ayub was taking a bath when Allah rained locusts of gold upon him. Ayub caught them and began putting them in a piece of cloth. Allah called out to Ayub, saying, "What is this you are doing? Have We not given you enough as it is?" Ayub said, "My Lord it is true, but who can remain indifferent to Thy munificence?"

Commenting on this Tradition, Hafiz Ibn Hajar says that Imam Bukhari proves nothing by it. If there is any Tradition that is applicable here it is one from Anas which has been quoted by Ibn Abi Hatim, and Ibn Jarir and Ibn Habban Hakim have verified.

The Tradition is that Ayub suffered from his afflictions for thirteen years during which all his relatives and friends left him except two who kept visiting him. One day one of the two said to the other that it seemed that Ayub had committed some very great sin on account of which he had been made to suffer in this way. Otherwise Allah would have had mercy on him and cured him.

These words were conveyed to Ayub who was greatly perturbed, and falling prostrate, prayed to Allah. Moments later he was inspired to strike the earth with his foot where he stood, and, as he did so, a spring of water gushed out in which he bathed himself. This cured him and he looked thoroughly recovered and refreshed. When his wife saw him, she could scarcely recognise him, and he told her that it was he, Ayub, and related how Allah had out of His munificence restored him to perfect health.

¹⁰ Tafsir Surah e Sa'd.

¹¹ Fath ul Bari Vol-6, p. 326.

For his food Ayub had a bundle of wheat and oats which Allah changed to gold and silver respectively to add to his wealth.¹²

A similar occurrence has been recorded by Abdullah ibn Abbas;¹³ while Wahab b. Munabbah says that Ayub's period of suffering was three years, and Hasan that it was seven years.¹⁴

It appears that this and other such narratives have been borrowed from the New Testament Book Ayub. The two details mentioned above are not to be found in the Qur'an but are there in the Old Testament. One, that his friends said to him that he had become so afflicted because he had committed some great sin; and second, that he did not agree with this and contended with his friends.

This argument is given in great detail in the Old Testament. When these friends were not convinced, Ayub turned to Allah and prayed that he may be cured.¹⁵

"Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, 'If one ventures a word with you, will you be offended Think now who that was innocent ever perished. Or were the upright cut off. As I have seen, those who plough iniquity and sow trouble, reap the same.' "Then Zophar the Namathite answered; Should a multitude of words go unanswered and a man fall of talk be vindicated Know that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves Can you find out the secret of God?..... "
(Ayub 11. 1-7.....)

Ayub said that he was sinless and that his afflictions were a trial from Allah, and we cannot circumvent Allah's ways. Allah confirmed Ayub and held his friends to be in the wrong.

"After the Lord had spoken these words to Ayub, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temainte, My wrath is kindled against you and against your friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Ayub has said" (42.7)

Fath ul Bari Vol-6, p. 326.

Fath ul Bari Vol-6, p. 327.

Tafsir Ibn Kathir Vol-2, p. 100.

Job Ch. 4, Verse 1-7.

The Old Testament gives the names of Ayub's friends as Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhiite and Zephor the Namathite,

Researchers on the Torah claim that the argument between Ayub and his friends is an unsurpassed masterpiece of blank verse and is the oldest such literature in the world. Chronological the Rig Veda may object to this claim, if that religion is recognised which attempts to take it back to as early as 1500 BC and even earlier.¹⁶

Ayub's Death—

According to the Old Testament, after his recovery Ayub lived a hundred-and-forty years.

“And after this Ayub lived a hundred-and-forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, four generations. And Ayub died, an old man, and full of days.” (Ayub 42:16, 17)

Lessons—

People of vision have much to learn from the mysteries and Divine ways behind Ayub's patience, steadfastness and self-control, gratitude and forbearance.

1) From among the devotees of Allah the nearer they are to Him the more are they placed in tests and tribulations, and if they get through with patience and steadfastness, those sufferings become the cause of their elevation.

The Prophet ﷺ says:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم اشد الناس بلاء الانبياء ثم الصالحون ثم الامثل فالامثل
(الحديث)

“Of sufferings the hardest of tests and tribulations are those of the prophets; then, of the saints; and then according to grades.”

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يتلى الرجل على قدر دينه فان كان في دينه صلابة زيد في بلاءه
(الحديث)

¹⁶ Tafsir Tarjuman ul Qur'an Vol-12, p. 488.

"A human being is tested according to the grades of his deen; If his deen is firm, in times of adversity he will also be more firm than others."

2) It is not difficult to be grateful during times of ease, wealth and honour; easier if there is no egotism and pride. But to be patient during suffering, sorrow and adversity and not to utter a word of complaint is very difficult. Thus if one is constantly patient and steadfast and grateful, in such circumstances, Allah's mercy too surges up and showers unexpected blessings on such people, and he is triumphant in both the worlds. Ayub's life is an example of this truth.

إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ () فَاسْتَجَبْنَا
لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرٍّ وَأَتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنْ
عِنْدِنَا وَذِكْرَى لِلْعَبِيدِينَ () (الانبياء ج ١٧ ع ٢)

3) Man should never despair of Allah's mercy because discontent is unbelief. Never think that tribulations come only as a result of sin, but sometimes also as a test, for the patient brings blessing from Allah. We have in one Tradition, Allah addressing His devotee, says: "I am near my devotee's assumption of Myself (and)."

انا عند ظن عبدى بى (الحديث)

"That is, whatever My devotee in his heart believes Me to be, that belief I fulfill for him."

4) The most likable feature in husband and wife relations is fidelity. For this reason, Satan looks upon sowing seeds of malcontent, disgust, suspicion and hatred between the two as his most cherished performance. Islam gives good tidings of paradise to the woman who is good and faithful to her husband. Her sincerity and love are all the more appreciated when her husband is surrounded by calamities, and his close relatives and friends abandon him. Ayub's wife gave proof of such devotion to her husband, sincerity, and sympathy that Allah commanded Ayub to carry out his oath in a manner different from the usual. Her status with Allah may best be imagined.

5) Humility and gratitude in circumstances of ease and well-being, and patience and steadfastness during misfortune are such blessings that whoever is endowed with them can never be unsuccessful in this or the next world. Allah's pleasure is always with him.

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: "وَأَذِّنْ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ"

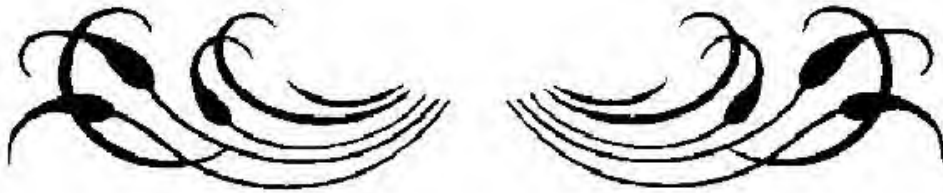
(ابراهيم ج ۱۳ ع ۲)

"And when your Lord proclaimed: If you give thanks, I will give you more, but if you are thankless, lo! My punishment is dire".
(Abraham 7)

(وقال) وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَأَنَا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ () أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ()

(بقره)

Give glad tidings to the patient who say when a misfortune striketh them, Lo! We are Allah's and unto Allah we are returning. Such are they on whom there are blessings from their Lord and mercy. Such are the rightly guided!
(Al Baqar 155-156)



HAZRAT YOUNUS (Jonah) ﷺ

The name of Younus is mentioned in six Surahs of the Qur'an, al Nisa, al An'am, Yunus, al Safa't, al Anmbiya al Qalam.

In four he is mentioned by name, and in two by description, *saheb al hoot* and *zool-noon*.

<i>Sr.#.</i>	<i>Surah</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>No. of times</i>
1	al Nisa	163	1
2	al An'am	87	1
3	Yunus	98	1
4	al Anmbiya	97, 98	2
5	al Safa't	129-148	10
6	al Qalam	48-50	3
	Total		18

It should be borne well in mind that in Surahs al Anmbiya and al Ana'm only his name is mentioned among several other prophets, and in the remaining four surahs, light is briefly thrown on relevant events, making prominent only such as are related to his life as a prophet, giving lessons of guidance.

The Qur'an is very clear on the incident connected with his life, though mentioned very briefly, commentators have dwelt on it at such length as to make it a subject of conflicting opinions. In order to understand it properly, we shall quote the Qur'an, in detail, and then go on to the commentaries.¹

Younus was twenty-eight years old when Allah bestowed prophethood on him and appointed him to guide the people of Ninevah. He continued to preach among them for a long time, but, like the people before them, they also refused to give ear to his word, ridiculed him and arrogantly continued in their ways of unbelief and *shirk*, (associating partners with the Divine Being). At last because of the enmity and opposition, he invoked a-curse on them and left them in great anger.

¹ Rooh ul Ma'ani. Surah e Yunus and al Safat

When he came to the Euphrates² he found a boat ready to sail and he stepped aboard it. The anchor was lifted and the boat set sail. On the way a violent storm overtook them; and as the boat was tossed about, the passengers feared that they would all drown, and said that it seemed there was a slave aboard running away from his master and as long as he was not separated, the storm would continue.

Overhearing these words, Younus thought that he had come away from Ninevah without waiting for inspiration to guide him which Allah did not like. He told the boat-owners that he was that slave and would like to be thrown overboard. But they were so impressed by his piety that they refused to do so, and decided that lots should be cast to enable them to decide who should be got rid of. Lots were cast three times and each time, Younus's name turned up. Reluctantly, he was thrown into the water, or, he himself jumped into it. By Allah's command a fish swallowed him. The fish had orders only to swallow him, not make its food of him, and his body should remain untouched.³ When Younus found himself alive in the fish, he prayed to Allah, expressing his remorse that without waiting for His command he had left Ninevah in disgust with his mission. He cried:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ()

"There is no God save Thyself: I glorify Thee; indeed, I have done wrong to myself."

Allah heard Younus's voice, full of pain, and commanded the fish to disgorge what it held in trust from Him, and the fish brought Younus up on the shore.

Masud says that on account of remaining in the fish, Younus's body had become like that of a newborn birdling, soft and without any hair on his body.⁴ A weakling, Younus was on dry land, and Allah grew a creeper for him⁵ and he began to live under its shade. After a few days, worms ate into the creeper's roots and it began to dry up, which made him very sad.

Then Allah inspired him to reflect that he grieved over a creeper drying up but he did not think that Allah would be grieved that a population of more than a

² Rooh ul Ma'ani

³ Fath ul Bari. Vol. 6, p 25.

⁴ Tafsir Ibn Kathir: al Saf'aat

⁵ It is said that it was a pumpkin creeper.

hundred-thousand , and other living things besides, might be destroyed, and that Allah was more considerate, compassionate and loving than him; but Younus cursed them and came away from them. It was unbecoming of a prophet that he should curse his people, and with hatred for them be in such haste as not even bothered to wait for inspiration.

When Younus having invoked a curse on the people departed from them, they began to feel the effects of the curse. Besides, by his leaving them they realised that he was indeed a prophet of Allah, and now destruction was inevitable. Obsessed with such thoughts everyone of them, from the king to the lowest, trembled with fear and began searching for Younus so that they might embrace Islam on his hands. They sought forgiveness of Allah and forsaking all manner of sins stepped out of the town into the field, bringing even their animals with them separating the young ones from their mothers. They wept and with one voice cried:

“Our Lord! we believe in that which Younus came to us with”. Allah heard their prayer, blessed them with faith and protected them against punishment.

Younus was now commanded to return to Ninevah, live among the people and guide them so that they might not remain deprived of His munificence. Younus obeyed and returned to Ninevah. When the people saw him they were overjoyed and triumphantly followed him in the ways of this world and the next.

This is the correct order of events requiring no commentary. It clarifies all the relevant Surahs without undue stress. This fact will be more evident after all the arguments are discussed and evaluated. However, first a study of the Verses of the Qur'an will be necessary.

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّا آمَنُوا

كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ()

(يونس ب ١١ ع ١٠)

If only there had been a community (of all those that had been destroyed of old) that believed and profited by its belief as did the folk of Younus. When they believed and We drew off from them the torment of disgrace in the life of the world and gave them comfort for a while. (Younus : 98)

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ
 أَنْ لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ () فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ
 وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ()

(انبياء ب ١٧ ع ٥)

And mention Dhun Nun when he went off in anger and deemed that We had no power over him, but he cried out in the darkness, saying, There is no God save Thee. Be Thou glorified! I have been a wrongdoer!. Then We heard his prayer and saved him from the anguish. Thus We save believers!
 (al Anmbiya 87)

وَإِنَّ يُونُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ () إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلِكِ الْمَشْحُونِ () فَسَاءَ
 لَهُمْ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ () فَالْتَقَمَهُ الْحُوتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ () فَلَوْلَا
 أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ () لَلَبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ () فَنَبَذْنَاهُ
 بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ () وَأَنْبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَقْطِينٍ () وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَى
 مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ () فَآمَنُوا فَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَى حِينٍ ()

(الصفافات ب ٢٣ ع ٥)

And lo! Yunus was of those sent (to warn): When he fled unto the laden ship; and then drew lots and was of those rejected. And a fish swallowed him while he was blameworthy. And had he not be one of those who glorify (Allah), he would have tarried in its stomach till when they are raised. Then we cast him on a desert shore while he was sick. And We caused a tree of gourd to grow above him: and We sent him to a hundred-thousand folk or more. And they believed, therefor We forgave them and gave them comfort for a while.
 (Safaat 139-148)

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَى وَهُوَ
 مَكْظُومٌ () لَوْلَا أَنْ تَدْرَكَهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِ لَبَدَّ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ مَذْمُومٌ ()
 فَاجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَجَعَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ () (القلم ب ٢٩ ع ٢)

But wait thou for the Lord's decree, and be not like him of the fish, who cried out in despair: Had it not been that favour from his Lord had reached him, he surely had been cast into the wilderness while he was reprobate. But his Lord chose him and placed him among the righteous.

(al Qalam 48,49)

Geneology

Muslim chroniclers and the Scripture people are agreed that it is certain that Younus' father was Mathew, but some say that this was his mother's name. This is a big mistake because it is mentioned in a Tradition from Abdullah ibn Abbas that the name of Younus's father was Mathew. The Scripture people spell Younus's (Jonah's) name as Yonah and his father's name Amti. In our opinion this difference is only because of translating from one language to another and is not of any significance.

Determining the period --

Hafiz Ibn Hajar believes that determining Younus's time historically is difficult. However, some chroniclers say that Younus appeared in Ninevah when Persia was going through its period of Anarchy.⁶

Historians divide the Persian era into three periods: the first, before the invasion by Alexander; the second, Parthvi or Anarchy; and the third, Sasanian.

The first period is counted as that of progress, commencing about 559 BC; coming to an end about 200 years later, about 372 BC; the second, Anarchy, from 372 until 150 BC,⁷ after which the Sasanian begins.

With these periods in view, according to Hafiz Ibn Hajar, Younus's period should be somewhere between 372 BC and the birth of Jesus. But historically this is not correct because historians agree that Ninevah was destroyed by the Chaldeans in 612 BC. Besides the narratives of the Scripture peoples show that after Younus's period when his followers, about 690 BC, renegaded to idolatry and tyranny and their rebelliousness increased, an Israeli prophet by the name of Nahum came to guide them but when they paid no heed to him, he foretold them of the destruction of Ninevah. Seventy years later Ninevah was destroyed. Thus Younus's time should be earlier than even 690 BC. Probably,

⁶ Fath ul Bari, Vol. 2, p. 350

⁷ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya: Vol. 2, p 183. This period ends with Ardsher b. Babkan the first Sasanian king.

Shah Abdul Qadir is right in holding that Younus was a contemporary of Hizkeel. He writes, "Younus was among the friends of Hizkeel, and began worshipping with great enthusiasm until he was commanded to go to Ninevah and forbid the people from worshipping idols."⁸

But, here, Arab chroniclers have been generally at fault. They have mistaken the name Hizkeel for that of the king though no king bearing this name ever appeared among the Israelis. Hizkeel is the famous prophet. Therefore, it is certain that Younus was an Israeli prophet.

In his book *Kitab ul Anmbiya*, Bukhari, according to his arrangement, mentions Younus's name between Moses, Shuayb and David.

Place of mission—

Younus appeared among the people of Ninevah, famous city of Iraq, metropolis of the Ashuri rulers and centre of Mosul. His time of advent was that of the zenith of the Ashuris, whose administrative-social structure was tribal, each tribe having its own king or ruler and Ninevah was the metropolis of them all, and, therefore, held in high esteem by them.

The Qur'an gives the population of this city as over a hundred-thousand. Tirmezi, on the basis of a *gharib* (not fully authenticated) Tradition, gives it as a hundred-and-twenty thousand). The Old Testament Book Younus also gives this number. But Ibn Abbas, Saeed b. Jabier, Makmool and others commenting on the words "or more", in the Qur'an say that it was between ten and seventy-thousand above. In our opinion, the first count is preferable.

Some commentaries—

The words in Surah e Anmbiya are:

وَذَاالنُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ

*And Dhun Noon when he went away angrily thinking that
We would not overtake him.*

There are several versions: one that Younus went off angry with his people and without waiting for inspiration or Allah's command. He did not think that because of this haste Allah would put him to tribulation and pain.

According to this commentary the word *mughaziban*, "in anger" is related to the people, and *lun naqdira alai-hi* means *lun nadiqa alai-hi*. The word *deeque* is commonly used for 'adversity'. This is what the majority believe, quoting from Ibn Abbas, Dahaka, Qatada and Hasan, and Ibn Kathir and Ibn Jarir agree with it.

⁸ Mauza al Qur'an. Surah e Anmbiya.

Some commentators, while agreeing with the former version take *qadara* (in *lun naqdira alai-hi*) to mean, *taqdir, qudrat* 'fate and nature', and derive the meaning, 'Younus thought that We would not be able to catch him'. This is what Atiyya Oofi holds, but such thought is *kufir* (unbelief). Such a thought would not cross the mind even of an ordinary Muslim, how then could it come to a prophet?

The answer, commentators give to this objection is that Allah's relations with prophets is very different from that of His relations with others. Any lapse looked upon as ignorable deserves to be grasped severely. Even very slight lapse is a great crime and is punishable, in order that they may realise that their position before Allah is so lofty, that such a lapse is unbecoming of their dignity. Yet, alongwith their lapse, Allah also says that although their lapse deserves the strictest reaction, there is not the slightest difference in their acceptability or stature. And because they are warned immediately about their mistake and they feel ashamed and present their excuse, their nearness to the Divine remains unmoved. Examples are Adam, Noah, David, Solomon and several other prophets.

The same case was with Younus. Younus did not think, nor could have thought, but because he was a prophet, and addressee of Divine inspiration, his going away was contrary to his dignity, therefore, Allah responded to his action with sternness, but retained his stature by declaring, that "*without doubt, Younus is among the prophets*" and "*he is among the righteous*", so that none might misunderstand or misuse this example as an excuse for his crooked ways.

Some commentators say that the word *mughaziban*, "angrily", is connected with Allah, implying that when after his warning, no punishment overtook the people, he was angry that Allah had made him out to be a liar. But this meaning is not correct. When it is admitted on all sides that he left Ninevah on being angry with his people, why should such clear meaning be rejected for an unautheticated story that Younus left Ninevah and put up in a jungle for a few days to see what overcame the people. Then Satan came to him disguised as an aged man and gave him news of their destruction, upon which he got angry with Allah and embarked on a boat. The entire story is absurd.

Shah Abdul Qadir takes a totally different approach. He writes in his *Mauza ul Qur'an* that the word *mughaziban* refers to both Allah and the people, and that Younus was angry on three occasions: once when he was commanded to proceed to Ninevah because the people there had gone too far in their idolatry and tyrannous ways; second, when living among them he counseled and tried to make them understand, but they gave no heed. So, foretelling of dire punishment, he went off in anger; and third, when he saw that punishment did

not come down on them, and he went away in anger thinking that he would be looked upon as a liar.

But I am surprised at the latter part that Younus knew that punishment had not been sent down on the people, yet he did not come to know that this was because they had become familiar with the true faith and were ready to welcome him. As for Satan coming with the news, it requires discussion based on shariyah of which there is no evidence here. Therefore, this contention too cannot be right in any respect.

Shah Abdul Qadir has also interpreted

أَنْ لَّنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ

'We would not be able to catch him'

in a strange manner which is reflective of his shrewdness. He says that Younus adopted such mannerism which implied that he was so annoyed that he would not reconcile again. But he was oblivion of the fact that he would be subjected to a trial and then on being relieved of it, he would forget all his indignation and would repent. Shah Abdul Qadir says that where power prevails, the difficulties disappear and impossible becomes possible.

Describing the acceptance of faith by the inhabitants of Ninevah, Surah Safaat says

فَأَمَّنُوا فَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

'And they believed, therefore We forgave them and gave them comfort for a while.'

While in Surah Younus, it is declared

لَمَّا آمَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

"When they believed and We drew off from them the torment of disgrace in the life of the world and gave them comfort for a while."

The expression *مَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ* in both the verses opened the doors of deliberation for the commentators. All the possible logical conclusions were drawn. Some were of the opinion that this is the convention of the Divine Law that once punishment is ordained for a nation, it is not averted, and accepting faith at this time is not acceptable, for this belief is not belief in the invisible

but belief on sight; as Pharaoh, on seeing the angels of punishment, when he was about to drown, had said;

أَمَّنَّا بِرَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ

'I declare my belief on the Lord of Musa and Haroon'.

But the folk of Younus was exempted from this Divine Law, and when they repented on seeing the imminent punishment, it was averted. This fact has been justified in the earlier part of the verse:

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ

"If only there had been a community (of all those that had been destroyed of old) that believed and profited by its belief as did the folk of Jonah."

According to most of the commentators this interpretation has no credibility, because nowhere in the verse it is mentioned that the punishment had approached the folk of Younus and when they were on the verge of punishment, then on witnessing the impending punishment their fear inclined them to believe. And again the folk of Younus is the only instance from whom punishment was averted on their accepting faith on seeing it; rather it is clearly stated in the verse that why the past nations did not believe as did the folk of Younus, so as the punishment would be averted from them also. Allah's annoyance is manifest in the verse that why did the past nations not save themselves from the punishment by accepting the faith. The interpretation of the verse by some commentators, which is against the common interpretation of the most of the commentators, implies that Allah's intention is that the nations, except the folk of Younus, who accepted faith on seeing the forthcoming punishment, He rejected their acceptance of faith and blessed the folk of Younus only by averting punishment from them. And if someone puts a question to these commentators that what was special about folk of Younus and what malice did Allah have against other nations, then what justification they would give for it? Still there are some commentators who believe that since the folk of Younus had believed on witnessing the punishment, therefore it (the punishment) was averted only in this life and the punishment of Hereafter still persists.

This interpretation is also incorrect and contrary to the context of the Qur'an; for, how the expression in Surah Saffat and Surah Younus مَتَّعْنَهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ should only mean that the fruit of their faith was restricted to this world and on the Day of Judgement they will be reckoned as unbelievers and

Mushrik (associators of partner with Allah); while Allah, in Surah Younus is admiring folk of Younus in order to condemn the unbelieving of the past nations. Moreover the context of the verse demands that past nations should also have acted in a likewise manner. Furthermore in Surah Safaat, their faith was not restricted to any limit. The thing worth mentioning here is that whenever Qur'an says *أَمَّنُوا* *Aa-manu*, it implies the meaning of that faith which is acceptable both in this world and Hereafter. The Qur'an never uses *أَمَّنَا* *Aa-manu, Aa-manna* with a different connotation than 'acceptable faith'. However, *مَتَّعْنَهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ* here either bears the same meaning which we have quoted above in the translation of Ibn Khatir or it implies that the history tells us that the nations which did not accept the guidance of their prophets and persecuted them, met a disastrous end by the curse invoked by these prophets and were made an admonition for the coming generations. This is why when Qur'an describes the nations of Aad, Thamud, Saleh, Loot, etc., one can imagine the sufferings they underwent, and is compelled to testify the Qur'an.

But there arises a doubt that if the people of Ninevah had accepted faith, then their generations should have prospered and should have existed today; whereas it is not so and history tells that this nation and their culture exterminated just like those nations which were subjected to punishment by Allah; even the splendid and historical city like Ninevah, which was the centre of Aashuri culture disappeared from the map of the earth in such a way that even its actual location became unknown by 200 B.C.⁹

But the Qur'an has already clarified this doubt so that the uncertainty be removed immediately. The Qur'an says that though it is correct that the folk of Younus had been transformed into a faithful, just and righteous nation but this period of goodness did not last long and after some period of time, the same substance of unbelief, shirk (associating partners with Allah), arrogance activated again in them, for the extinction of which Younus was sent as a Prophet. The Israeli Prophet of the period named Nahum tried his best to bring them back to the right track but they persisted to make arrogance and revolt, their aim of life. Then *Nahum* announced, through inspiration by Allah, destruction of Ninevah and within seventy years of his prediction, the culture and central city of Aashuri nation was devastated through the Babylonians and there remained behind no sign of their existence.

⁹ Tafseer Tarjuman ul Qur'an, Vol-II derived from a Greek historian.

Thus on one side the Qur'an praises folk of Yunus for their belief in faith, and on the other side it points out that the people who adopted the righteous path. He afforded them an opportunity of getting benefited *i.e.*, averted punishment from them. But this condition of folk of Yunus did not last long and a time came when they adopted the same mannerism as they had before and did not mend their ways despite teachings of the prophets. Then Allah did the same with them as He had done with the rebellious nations of the past, as is the tradition of Allah.

According to the opinion of the majority of the commentators, the factual position is that, the punishment had not approached the folk of Yunus, rather there were some preliminary signs of it. One of them was the departure of Yunus after invoking curse for the people. This sign was immediately felt by the people and on seeing some other signs and facts they started believing that Yunus was indeed a true Prophet of Allah; and thus they became believers. The meanings of عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا are when the punishment is destined for a rebellious nation, it has to face humiliation in this world before that they are doomed in Hereafter. When the folk of Yunus became believers, they were saved from the humiliation which was to overcome them due to their arrogance. This does not mean that they were saved from the punishment of this world only and the punishment after death still prevailed.

Hafiz ibn Hajar and Ibn Kathir, quoting from Abdullah b. Masud, Abdullah ibn Abbas, Mujahid Saeed b. Jabeer, agree with this version and say that this view was held by the old scholars. Commenting on the Verse, they write:

والغرض انه لم يوجد قرية امنت القرى الا قوم يونس وهم اهل
نينوى وما كان ايمانهم الا خوفاً من وصول العذاب الذى انذهم به
رسولهم بعد ما عاينوا سبابه وخرج رسولهم من بين اظهرهم
فَعِنْدَهَا جَا رُوَالِي اللّٰه و اسبعانوا به (الخ)

"Briefly, there was no habitation from among the past ones which believed in its prophets so completely as did Yunus's people in him, and they were the people of Ninevah. They had faith in him when they feared the coming punishment which their prophet had threatened them with. When they felt some signs of it and saw that Yunus had departed from them, they began seeking refuge in Allah."

¹¹ Tafseer Ibn Khatir Surah Yunus.

Commenting on the phrase: *mattana-hum ila heen* they say “*ayye ila waqat ijalahum.*”¹¹ That is, in their life they were saved from the punishment; as for death, it is for all people.

In another place, they say,

فَأَمَّنُوا فَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ وَاخْتَلَفَ الْمُفَسِّرُونَ هَلْ كَثَفَ عَنْهُمْ
العذاب الاخرى مع الدينوى او انما كثف عنهم فى الدنيا فقط ؟
على قولين والايمان منقذ من العذاب الاخرى وهذا هو الظاهر (الحج)

*“Scholars have two opinions over the words: fa amanu fa mattana-hum ila heen: one that punishments in this and the next life were averted; and the other that punishment only in this world was averted but remained for the next. True faith averts punishment in both this and the the next world.”*¹²

Here too Shah Abdul Qadir assumes his own peculiar stance, which, however, corroborates the majority opinion. He writes: “Belief on seeing the punishment has never been of use to anyone. But Younus’s folk was saved because Allah’s command had not yet come, instead signs of punishment had commenced on account of Younus’s hastiness, but they accepted the faith and were saved. In the same way the people of Makkah were saved at the time of the Conquest of Makkah, because they had faith and were given peace.”¹³

The false prophet from the Punjab, Mirza Ghulam Ahmed of Qadyan, has attempted to misuse Younus’s example to his advantage. He challenged that Allah had decided that if opposition to the Mirza continued, Divine punishment would come down on them by a certain date. But, instead of being intimidated, the people’s opposition increased all the more. But when no punishment came, he began retorting that this was because his opponents had become frightened in their hearts, just as it had been averted from Younus’s people.

But the Qur’an belies this claim of the Qadyani. Younus’s people openly announced their acceptance of the true faith before the punishment came; they acknowledged Younus as a true prophet and went in search of him, and on his

¹¹ Tafseer Ibn Khatir Surah Younus.

¹² Surah al Saffat and Fath ul Bari, Vol. 6, p. 351.

¹³ Surah Yunus

return, started following his faith and religion, but the Qadyani's opponents not only retained their opposition but intensified it.

And if we do suppose that the opponents feared in their hearts, can any one who believes in his heart but opposes by his words be called a believer? If this were so, why were the Jews who recognised the Prophet ﷺ to be a true prophet just as they recognised their own sons to be their offspring, not described as believers?

يَعْرِفُونَهُ، كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَ نُهُمُ

In this way, there can not be any comparison between Younus and Mirza Qadyani because when Younus returns to his people, he finds those he had left rebellious and arrogant, enemies to Allah and his prophet, now obedient and happy welcoming him? But the Qadyani Mirza found his opponents more vehement in their speech, writings and actions after his challenge. Some of those opponents are still alive with honour, while the Mirza died of affliction by the disease which was sent as a curse among some nations.

Surah al Saffat has the words *wa arsalna ila miata alfin au yuriduna fa amanu mattanahum ila heen*, and before these words is the verse *faltaqamuhu-al-hut wa hua muleem*. Because of the order in which these verses occur, the question arose whether Younus's advent took place before he was swallowed by a fish or after. Ibn Jarir quoting from Abdullah b. Abbas, holds that it was after, but Mujahid says that it took place before and that he had gone to Ninevah to preach his mission, while Baghvi believes that Younus had been appointed to preach to the people of Ninevah, and was sent to another community after the fish episode. The population of over a hundred-thousand mentioned in the Qur'an is about the latter, not of Ninevah.

But Baghvi's assertion is without authentication because there is not even a hint in the Qur'an that Younus was sent to two different communities. As for the order, the Verses are mentioned in, it thoroughly accords with the principles of eloquence and lucidity, because in the first Verse Younus's advent and mission are mentioned, and then are narrated his going away after becoming angry with the people, boarding a boat, getting caught in rough weather, lots being cast, his name coming up, and being swallowed by a fish after jumping into the waters; then emerging safe and sound, and by Divine mercy returning to his people to preach among them. Next we are told that the people, he was sent to, were not a few but numbered very many who believed and saved from punishment, lived happily.

There is no postponement or advancement of incidents in these Verses nor anything to justify Baghvi that there was another community referred to in the words *mi-ata alfin au uriduna*.

Similarly, the problem whether Yunus's advent took place before or after the fish episode is clear. There can be no two opinions. What Ibn Kathir has said in this connection is correct, namely, that Yunus had been sent as prophet to the people of Ninevah before and it was after he came away from them in anger that the fish incident took place, and it was now that he expressed his repentance which being accepted he was commanded to return to his people and lead them.

Old Testament Book Yunus —

It is recorded here that Allah appointed Yunus to guide the people of Ninevah, but he fled to Tarshish and during the voyage, the fish episode occurred. He was then warned that he should go back to Ninevah and do his duty. He did as he was commanded but seeing that the people refused his message, he threatened that punishment would overtake them in forty days and himself went away to a distant place.

Now the people believed and everyone from the king down to his subjects clothed themselves in sackcloth, separated the young ones, human and animal, from their mothers and came out in the open fields, wept and prayed repentance, and began searching for Yunus.

Now Yunus saw that forty days had passed but the punishment, he had threatened them with, had not fallen on them, he was aggrieved with Allah and went away very far, and called on Him saying that he had come away to Tarshish, not go to Ninevah, because he knew that Allah was very soft and compassionate, quick in mercy but slow in temper and Yunus realised that he had been made out to be a liar, and beseeched death, for, now it was better to die than live and he set up a booth for himself and began to live under it. Allah grew a plant to give shade. This pleased him, but overnight a worm ate into the roots of the plant which dried it up. This saddened Yunus, on which Allah said to him: 'You are sad over the drying up of a tree: and would I not be merciful to a population of a hundred-and-twenty thousand?'

This document is in the Old Testament by Yunus's name and is spread over four chapters. It begins with the words:-

"Now the word of the Lord came to Yunus, the son of Amitai, saying, Arise, go to Ninevah, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before me.

And the last words are:

'Do you do well to be angry for the plant? And he said, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die. And the Lord said, You pity the plant for which you did not labour, nor did you

make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. And should I not pity Ninevah, that great city, in which there are a hundred-and-twenty-thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

There is a great deal of correspondence between the Qur'an and the Old Testament Book Younus, but there are also some differences. The Qur'anic version in such places is correct because it is the outcome of Divine inspiration, but the Old Testament book is a writing by someone else.

There are differences of opinion over the duration of time given for the punishment of the people of Ninevah: three days, seven or forty days. Ibn Kathir prefers three days, while Shah Abdul Qadir gives forty days, which is also the period stated in the Old Testament.

We stated in the beginning that in Surah al Anbiya and al Qalam, Younus is not mentioned by name but by his attribute. In al Anbiya he is referred to as *Zun Noon*. This is because in old Arabic *noon* means fish, and in al Qalam he is *saheb el hoote*, *hoote* also means fish. Because of the fish episode he went through, he is described as 'of the fish'.

Younus's death—

Shah Abdul Qadir says that Younus died in the city to which he had been appointed, and was also buried there. But Abdul Wahab Najjar tells us that there is a grave in Halole, a township near the well known city of Khalil in Palestine, which is said to be of Younus, and there is another grave near it which is said to be his father Amit-tai's grave.

We think that the Shah Saheb's version is correct, because all our sources inform us that Younus returned to Ninevah and spent his entire life there. It is therefore, probable that he died in Ninevah and his grave must be there, becoming extinct after Ninevah's destruction. Later two unidentified graves in Malhol were selected or set up out of good faith and given out as Younus's and his father Amittai's. Similar things are done even today; a saint's tomb exists in several places; and there are many graves of unknown holy persons which are used for worldly gain.

Younus's virtues—

The Holy Prophet ﷺ speaking of Younus has paid great tribute to him. Bukhari records:

عن عبد الله (بن مسعود) رضى الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه
وسلم قال: لا يقولن احدكم انى خير من يونس بن متى -

"The Prophet ﷺ said: Let no one say: that I am better than Yunus"

Abu Hurayra transmits that a Jew was selling his merchandise and the customer refused to pay the price demanded of him, but the Jew swore: "By him who made Moses the greatest of human beings, I will not sell it for less."

The customer who was an Ansar slapped the Jew, saying, "You utter such words when the Prophet ﷺ is among us."

The Jew reported the matter to the Prophet ﷺ saying, "O Abul Qasim, since I am under your protection how has this Ansar dared to slap me?" The Prophet ﷺ on hearing the whole incident, was red in the face with anger, and said, "Do not give the prophets precedence over one another, for when the first trumpet is blown all living beings between the skies and earth will become unconscious, except those whom Allah exempts; then when the second trumpet is blown, the first being to regain consciousness will be me, and I will see Moses already standing up reclining against the Throne. Now I cannot say whether this will be because of being compensated by the incident on Mount Sinai and he now did not become unconscious, or whether he regained consciousness before me; and I do not say that any prophet is superior to Yunus b. Amit-tai."¹⁴

Special mention of Yunus in this Tradition, it is unanimously agreed, is to convey to everyone that none who read about Yunus should find fault with him. His eminence is safeguarded.¹⁵

Virtues of all prophets---

But a question arises here out of the tribute paid by the Prophet ﷺ to Moses and forbidding comparison between one prophet and another. On one side, there are the words of the Qur'an, "Of the prophets, some in grades are above others." While, according to a Tradition, he says, "I say without arrogance that I am the chief of all the children of Adam.", and also "Do not differentiate between the virtues of one prophet and another; and "Let none of you say that I am superior to Yunus bin Amit-tai."

How may we establish correspondence between the words of the Qur'an and the Tradition?

¹⁴ Bukhari: Kitab ul Anmbiya.

¹⁵ Fath ul Bari, Vol. 6, p. 351.

There are a number of opinions among Traditionists. Some say that the Prophet ﷺ forbade making distinctions between the greatness of one prophet and another at the time when that verse of Surah al Baqar had not yet been revealed which mentions the varying grades among the prophets and he had not been given the knowledge of his own superiority.

But this answer is quite weak, because the incident of the Jew we have quoted took place, or the Traditions pertaining to Younus were related towards the end of the Madni period, and before this, many incidents about the comparative virtues of the prophets have been recorded as spoken by the Prophet ﷺ.

Another opinion is that although according to some methods of selecting authenticity, words have been quoted regarding the comparative virtues of the prophets, *la tafdalū bay al anbiya-e*, the objective is the Prophet ﷺ, as appears to be the case from the incident of the Jew and reference to Younus. And although the Prophet ﷺ knew that Allah had given him precedence above all the children of Adam, he spoke those words out of humility.

But this answer too is not strong enough because those words are addressed to all and sundry, and there is no sense in confining them to his own person.

The third opinion is that the words in the Traditions regarding the forbidding of making distinctions among prophets imply only their status as prophets, but not their individual virtues and attributes, as is further proved by the description of a true believer that he does not differentiate between prophets, or believe in some and disbelieves in others.

But this answer would have been interesting if the words of the Prophet ﷺ had been spoken to decide on the matter of believing or disbelieving a true prophet. In the incident of the Jew there was no issue of a true or false prophet, but only of the comparative grades of two prophets, Moses and the Prophet ﷺ.

The best solution to this problem is to assume that grades exist among the prophets, some having precedents above others, and the Prophet ﷺ has precedence over all human beings, including the prophets, and the reason for his forbidding others to make such distinctions between the prophets is as imply the defects. That is, one should not, overcome by affection for any prophet, say things that may imply defects and faults in another prophet. Besides it is forbidden to debate comparisons among prophets, because it is likely that by doing so one might utter things of disrespect or affront. This would be unbelief, *kufr*, instead of faith. When the Prophet ﷺ forbade making distinctions it was in a situation of such argument. Otherwise Allah Himself has appointed different grades among the prophets, and comparisons are not forbidden.

Ibn Hajar writes:

قال العلماء فى نهيه صلى الله عليه وسلم عن التفضيل بين الانبياء
انما نهى عن ذلك من يقوله برأيشه لامن يقوله بدليل او من يقوله
بحيث يودى الى تنقيص المفضول او يودى الى خصومة والتنازع
او المراد لا تفضلوا بجميع انواع الفضائل بحيث لا يترك للمفضول
فضيلة فالامام مثلاً اذا قلنا انه افضل من المؤذن لا يستلزم نقص
فضيلة المؤذن بالنسبة الى الاذان وقيل النهى عن التفضيل انما هو فى
حق النبوة نفسها كقوله تعالى لا نفرق بين احد من رسله ولم ينه
عن تفضيل بعض الذوات على بعض لقوله تعالى تلك الرسل
فضلنا بعضهم على بعض -

"The Prophet ﷺ has forbidden attributing precedents such as emanate from one's own fancy. Those opinions are not forbidden which are based in shariah. Also forbidden are those that may lead to fault finding in the prophet over whom precedence is being stated, or may lead to dispute; or gather in one prophet all good attributes implying that the other prophet is void of any good attributes. Such comparison where it is said, for instance, that the imam has precedence over the muezzin, does not imply any fault in the muezzin, and it is permissible. Another weak argument is that one must not give precedence on the basis of their being prophets. But in respect of some great personages, to give precedence based on the personal virtues of one prophet as compared with those of another is not forbidden, as confirmed by Allah's own words: Tilkar-rusulu, etc.,

وقال الحليمى الاخبار الواردة فى النهى عن التخيير انما هى فى
مجادلة اهل الكتاب و تفضيل بعض الانبياء على بعض بالمخايرة
لان المخايرة اذا وقعت بين اهل دينين الا يؤمن ان يخرج احدهما
الى الازدراء با لآخر فيفضى الى الكفر فاما اذا كان التخيير مستنداً
الى مقابلة الفضائل لتحصيل الرجحان فلا يدخل فى النهى -

Aini says

“The Traditions that forbid precedence-making pertain to occasions when there is a dispute between Muslims and peoples of the Scripture, or Christians and Muslims may be giving precedence to their prophets, one above the other, because when this happens it becomes difficult to prevent such words being spoken that reflect on the respect due to the Prophet of the other’s religion, and become the cause of kufr, unbelief, (because it is obligatory on a Muslim to look upon the true prophets of every religion as their own prophets). But it is not forbidden if the motive be discussion of the virtues of the prophets to prove the real superiority of one.”

Lessons –

Reflecting on Younus’s narrative with vision, the following lessons reveal themselves:

- 1) It is Allah’s law that when nations turn away from a prophet’s invitation and continue in their rebellion and persecution, and the prophet warns them of punishment, only two ways are left open to them: either convert to belief before the punishment comes and be saved from the punishment, or be subjected to the punishment. It never happens that a nation does not believe and is also saved the punishment. In proof are the communities of Noah, of Saleh, or Lot, A’ad, Thamud, and such who perished in all their grandeur and power.
- 2) Of past communities that of Jonah is one that believed before punishment came down on it and becoming truly obedient, saved itself. If only coming nations did the same to be saved from Allah’s punishment! But, alas, they did not!
- 3) Allah treats prophets differently from the others, and it should be so because the prophets have direct communication with Allah. Therefore, the responsibility of conveying Allah’s commands falls on them and cannot be that of the others. Their duty is that whatever they do must be in the light of Divine inspiration; specially in connection with their mission, all matters have to be based on *ilm ul yaqeen*, knowledge-by-certain-faith. This is the reason why when they act with haste any time, without waiting for revelation, Allah requires very severely their excuse for it, no matter how ordinary the thing concerned might be, and He interprets their action in such a manner that others think that they must have committed some great crime. But at the same time, His support is with them, and, immediately, abashed and repentant they seek forgiveness, which Allah accepts elevating their status all the more.

This point is of great importance in the diction of the Qur'an. The reader who does not know it gets confused on the subject. Seeing, on the one hand, that Allah highly lauds a Prophet, and, on the other, that the Prophet is guilty of a great crime, he either goes astray or gets lost in superstitions and suspicions. Therefore, in all matters pertaining to the prophets it is necessary to keep in mind this fact so as keep on the right path.

4) The teaching of Islam is that every true Prophet, no matter what the religion, is a Muslim's own Prophet, and it is necessary to believe in him just as it is necessary to believe in the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. That is why though believing him to have precedence over all mankind and to be chief of all the prophets, it is forbidden to praise him in a manner that is derogatory to other prophets. --- Something that is usually seen at functions celebrating the birth of the Prophet ﷺ where poetic verses are recited that are forbidden.



HAZRAT ZULKIFL عليه السلام

The Qur'an mentions this prophet in two Surahs, Al Anmbiya and Sa'ad, without going into details of any kind.

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ۗ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّابِرِينَ () وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُمْ فِي

رَحْمَتِنَا ۗ إِنَّهُمْ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ () (انبياء ج ١٧ ع ٢)

Ismail, and Idris and Zul Kifl were all patient and We took them in Our mercy. Verily they were righteous.

(Al Anmbiya)

وَأَذْكُرُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ۗ وَكُلٌّ مِّنَ الْأَخْيَارِ ()

(ص ج ٢٣ ع ٤)

Make mention of Ismail and Al-Yasa, and Zul Kifl; they were all among the righteous. (Sa'd)

As we have just said, there is little more said except the name of Zul-Kifl in the Qur'an. There is also nothing recorded from the Prophet ﷺ. In the light of the Qur'an nothing more can be said about him than that he was a prophet and sent one, nabi and rasool of Allah and must have been appointed to some community of people to guide them. Despite efforts, nothing could be found in history to throw light on him. The Bible too is silent.

However, Ibn Jarir has quoted a story from the famous commentator Tabai Mujahid. and somewhat corresponding to it there are quotations by Ibn Abi Hatim from Abdullah Ibn Abbas and Abu Musa Ashari, no reliable authority for which is to be found, their reporter-chain being broken.¹

Mujahid's narrative is: that when the Israeli prophet, Al-Yasa, became very old, he said, "Would that there was some one in my life worthy of becoming my heir to continue my mission, and I had the satisfaction of knowing it."

He. then. called a congregation of the people and addressing it, said, "I want to choose a man from among you to be my caliph. There are three conditions he will have to abide by: he will fast the whole day; and spend the night in devotional prayers; and must never lose his temper."

¹ Between these two Companions and the narrator of the original source, one or more

One man, quite ordinary, in the eyes of others, rose up saying that he was ready for such service. Al Yasa repeated his three conditions and asked if he would carry them out. The man replied that he certainly would.

The next day Al Yasa called another congregation in which he repeated his words of the previous day. All kept silent, except the same man who had volunteered before. Stepping forward he swore on oath to fulfill the conditions. Al Yasa, then appointed him as his caliph.

Satan could not bear to see all this, thus collecting his minions advised them to do something that would make this man stumble and become unable to fulfill the conditions. The minions tried their best but were unsuccessful. Satan then decided to commit the mischief himself.

The caliph's custom was that he would take a short nap only during the day so as to relieve himself of fatigue. One day Satan assuming the appearance of an aged man in very wretched condition, came and knocked at the caliph's door during his nap hour. The caliph came out to inquire who was there. Satan said that he was an oppressed and weak man. The caliph opened the door and asked about the visitor's condition. Satan narrated his story making it so lengthy that the caliph's sleeping time went by. The "amir" of the Children of Israel told the old man, Satan, to go away and come in the evening when there would be a meeting of the people, and he would do what he could for him.

When evening came Satan did not appear. The next morning when the meeting was held he was again not seen, but, later when Zul Kifl's time for his nap came, Satan again knocked at his door, which was opened and the same old man stood there, repeating his words of the previous day. The caliph said, "I had asked you to come to the evening meeting but you did not turn up? Satan said, "My community is very perverse. When they see you in the meeting, they tell me not to appeal to you, and promise me quietly that they will give me my right. But after you close the meeting, they go back on their word." The caliph said, "Do not fail to come this evening; I will have your right delivered to you in my presence."

The conversation was so prolonged that the caliph's time for rest again passed, which made him very ill at ease. At the evening meeting the old man was again absent and so also at the meeting next morning. The caliph was so tired and overcome by sleep that he instructed his family not to open the door for anyone when he was asleep, whoever might come.

The caliph had just lain down when the old man came again and knocked on the door, but it was not opened and he was told that under orders from the caliph the door must not be opened. The old man said, "I have been coming here for the last two days for a very important work and the caliph has called

me at this time. So kindly open the door". But the door was not opened. Despite, the family saw that though the door was not opened, the old man stood inside the house and was knocking at the door of the caliph's room. The caliph opened the door and told the inmates that he had instructed them not to open the door, how then was this man allowed to enter. At the same time, he glanced at the door and saw that it was bolted, and the old man stood nearby. Now the caliph understood and asked, "You enemy of Allah! Are you Satan?" The old man answered, "Yes, I am Satan. Since you tired me out in every way, and my minions could not overpower you I assumed this last shape and form to overawe you, and make you stumble in keeping your oath, but, alas, I myself have failed".

Because of this episode Allah made this caliph famous with the title of Zul Kifl, for, he fulfilled the promise he had made to the prophet Al-Yasa.²

This narrative by Mujahid is ambiguous as to its authenticity as well as unappealing to intelligence but, at the same time, in a way it is also indisputable. The Tradition quoted from Ibn Abbas and Abu Musa Ashari is disconnected in its chain of narrators. The whole story is no more than a fable. We have called it 'also' indisputable because although the Qur'an gives no details about Zul Kifl, it does include him in the list of prophets. Therefore, it cannot be expected of such eminent companions as Abu Musa Ashari and Abdullah Ibn Abbas and a devotee like Tabai to say that he was not a prophet, but a righteous man, as Ibn Kathir has described him quoting from these three personages.

Shah Abdul Qadir says that Zul Kifl was Job's (Ayub's) son. He stood surety for someone who disappeared, on account of which he had to spend some time in prison.

"It is said that Zul Kifl was Ayub's son; he stood surety for someone and had to be imprisoned with hard labour for some time."³

Some contemporaries believe that Zul Kifl is the title of the prophet Hizqeel, while another opinion is that it is Gautam Buddha's title whose metropolis was Kapil, arabised as Kifl. The prefix *Zu* in Arabic means 'owner'. Thus *zu maal* for owner of wealth and *zu-balad* for city owner are in common use. The lord and king of Kapil is Zul Kifl. These contemporaries also claim that Budhha's teaching originally was Unity of the Divine Being and true Islam, but like so many other teachings, it has been distorted and interpolated. Such opinions

² Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol 3, p. 190-191.

³ Mauzah ul Furqan: Surah al Anmbiya.

have no historical basis and should be taken as no more than personal opinions.

We do not agree with the prejudice that if history proves that where the Qur'an has mentioned only the name of a prophet, it must pertain to such and such a great personage, but should be rejected only because it has not been said by anyone else before.

No doubt the doors of historical research are never closed. Time and again new discoveries appear. Indeed, the discoveries support the Qur'an and what the Prophet ﷺ spoke about things which agnostics denied because history and the philosophy of history did not support them. If new research throws light on someone mentioned by the Qur'an, it is not to be denied by us, for, it is one more argument against our critics. At the same time, it is not that only because someone merely in his opinion advances a claim, it should be admitted. To say, for instance, that Gautam Buddha is Zul Kifl is no more than an opinion.

For us to believe that Allah sent his messengers to various parts of this earth, two or three passages in the Qur'an should be enough. They are a distinguishing feature of Islam, the religion of truth:

وَأَنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ

(a) "There is not a community to which a warner was not sent"

مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ

(b) "We have mentioned the events of some prophets (by mentioning their names) and of some We have not mentioned any detail."

لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ

(c) (Every believer should possess the faith) "We do not make distinctions between one prophet and another." (That is, we believe in all the prophets).

This being our faith, if the events of some prophets of some regions are not known to us, there are other reasons. But as far as having faith in them is concerned even brief references to them are sufficient. For purposes of our guidance and deeds their details are not necessary, seeing specially that Allah has told us that the Prophet ﷺ is the last of the prophets who researching through all manner of true arguments, has evolved them to perfection.

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ
الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

(المائدة 3)

Today We have perfected your religion for you, and We have completed Our blessing upon you, and We have approved for you Islam as religion. (al Ma'idah : 5)

We admit that true prophets were sent also to India and according to some biographies, Adam the father of mankind was sent down to some paradise like part of India. But unless it is proved by the Qur'an or some authentic Tradition that Zul Kifl is the title of Gautam the Buddha, it cannot be admitted on the basis of a mere guesswork opinion. Just as it is *kufir* to disbelief in any prophet, so it is wrong to look upon a non-prophet as a prophet.

Removing a misunderstanding—

Imam Hambal has quoted a Tradition from Abdullah b. Umar that the Prophet ﷺ said that there was a man by the name of Kifl among the Israelis, a great sinner and evil man. Once a beautiful woman came to him and he made her consent in lieu of sixty dinars. But when he came close to her she began to tremble and weep. He asked her if she disliked him. She said that was not so but that she had never committed such a deed before, and had been forced to it now because of hunger.

When Kifl heard these words, he at once separated from her, saying, "It can never be that what you have never committed before, you should do today only for the sake of your hunger. Go back to your house as clean and pure as you came, and take the money also with you. By Allah! from this moment on, Kifl will never do anything disobedient to Allah!"

Incidentally, Kifl died that very night, and in the morning people saw that a hand of the unseen had written on his door: the words: "Allah, without doubt, has forgiven Kifl!"

In this Tradition, the name is Kifl, not Zul Kifl, some man other than Zul Kifl. This narrative, therefore, is not about Zul Kifl.

Lessons—

1) Islam is a religion, invitation to which is based on the recognition that its mission transcends all differences of race, caste, country and nationality, and is not bound by limits or grouping; nor does it acknowledge the monopoly of any sect, because the Divine Being the Glorious is One and Peerless. His message, too, should be one, and is one, and its proclamation of Truth encompasses all, black or white, gentile or native, Arab, European, American, African, free of every binding, commitment and alteration.

Yet , keeping in view the changes of age and time, the rise and fall of nations and their evolution, their intellectual and pragmatic capabilities there is in it a resilience so that while retaining the foundations as unaffected, commands and details of the message might change so that spiritual evolution may attain to perfection, and human achievements of the mind may come up to their zenith.

In spiritual and religious terms, this unchangeable feature of the message of Truth is called *deen*, which Allah has equated with Islam.

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ سَوَّيْتُمْ لَكُمْ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ

(آل عمران ج ٣ ع ٩)

To God, there is no religion but Islam. And whoso seeketh a religion other than the Surrender, to (Allah), it will not be accepted from him. (Aal e Imran: 85)

هُوَ سَمَّاكُمْ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا - (حج ج ١٧ ع ١٠)

"He hath named you Muslims of old time and in this (Scripture)" (Al Hajj v. 78)

لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَا جَا

(مائدہ ج ٦ ع ٧)

For each have We appointed a Divine law and a traced out way. (Al Ma'idah: 48)

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمْ

الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا (المائدہ ج ٦ ع ١)

This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion AL ISLAM. (Al Ma'idah: 3)

Thus beginning from Adam to the time of the Prophet Muhammed ﷺ the religion of all prophets, nabis and rasools, has always been one, namely, Islam, but Allah's commands and some details have been different according to the times. These are called *shariah* and *minhaj*. When spiritual evolution and religious thought and capacity reached their maturity of perfection, all the former *shariah*, through the Holy Prophet Muhammed ﷺ, were absorbed in the *shariah-e-Muhammad*, and transcending geographical boundaries, made to prevail over all the universe.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا (سباء ج ٢٢ ع ٣)

And We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) save as a bringer of good tidings, and a warner unto all mankind.

(Saba : 28)

For this reason a prominent side of the teaching of Islam is the proclamation that Allah's true givers of good tidings and warners have appeared among all communities, and, therefore, it is the duty of every Muslim that he announces his belief that he does not consider it right to differentiate between one prophet and the other, and just as he believes in the Prophet ﷺ, so does he also believe in every other prophet, whether we are familiar with his name and place and the episodes and events of his life or not.

2) It seems that Zul Kifl is one of the Israeli prophets, but nothing worth recording by way of guidance and conveying lessons, besides his general mission, happened in his time, such as the events in the times of other prophets detailed in the Qur'an. Therefore, the Qur'an has been content with merely mentioning his name and does not go into details of events and conditions.

In this work 'Qasas ul Qur'an' it has been stated in several places that the Qur'an's purpose of referring to the history of nations and communities is no more than conveying guidance, vision and lessons otherwise history is neither its subject nor objective.

كَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ مَا قَدْ سَبَقَ عَوَقَدْنَا لَدُنَّا ذِكْرًا (١)

(طه ج ١٦ ع ٥)

Thus relate We unto thee (Muhammad) some tidings of that which happened of old, and We have given thee from Our presence a Reminder.

(Taha: 99)

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

(يوسف ج ١٣ ع ١٢)

In their history there is a lesson for men of understanding.

(Yusuf: 111)

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ

وَلَدَارًا لَّا خَيْرَ لِّلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ (١)

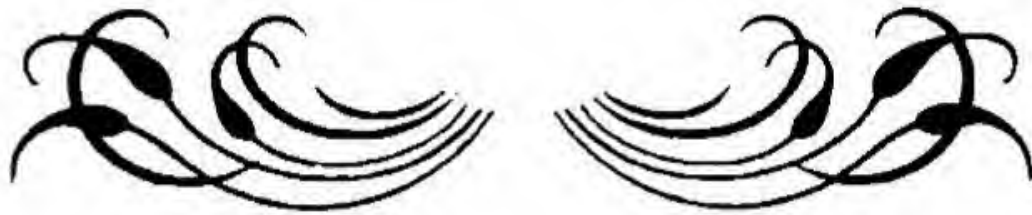
(يوسف ج ١٣ ع ١٢)

Have they not traveled in the land and seen the nature of the consequence for those who were before them. And, verily, the abode of the Hereafter, for those who ward off evil, is best. Have ye then no sense? (Yusuf: 109)

وَكُلًّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ ۚ وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ()

(هود ج ١٢ ع ١٠)

And all that We narrate unto thee of the story of the messengers is in order that thereby We may make firm thy heart. And herein hath come unto thee the truth and exhortation and a reminder for believers. (Houd: 120)



HAZRAT UZAYR (Ezra) عليه السلام

The Qur'an mentions Uzayr's name only once and that in Surah e Tauba to tell us that "the Jews say that Uzayr is the son of Allah and the Christians say that Jesus is the son of Allah." There is no further mention of him anywhere in the pages of the Qur'an and no details about him.

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ
ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَبْلُ
قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ
(توبه ب ۱۰ ع ۵)

And the Jews say: Uzayr is the son of Allah; and the Christians say: the Messiah is the son of Allah. That is their saying with their mouths. They imitate the saying of those who disbelieved. Allah (Himself) fighteth against them. How perverse are they!
(al Tauba)

However, in Surah e Baqar there is a story about some elite person who, riding his ass, happened to pass through a place lying in utter ruin, without a house or resident of a house, only traces of what might have been once a habitation. The man reflected and said to himself how can a place in utter desolation ever be populated and come to life again!

He was lost in such thinking when he breathed his last and died. His body lay there for one hundred years after which he was brought back to life and Allah asked him how long he had been there. When he had breathed his last, the sun was coming up, and now when he was given a second life, the sun was about to set, and so he replied, "A day or perhaps a part of a day." Allah told him: "That is not so; you have been in this condition for one hundred years. And as for your astonishment, look at your food and the things about you; they are intact and side by side look at your ass, its flesh has rotted away and only the skeleton remains. And now reflect on Our power to do things: that what We desired should remain unchanged, has remained unchanged: and what We intended should rot away has rotted away. And now while you look on We shall bring it back to life; and all this that We make it a portent for you and all people so that you may witness how We give life back to the dead and re-inhabit what is ruined." So, after witnessing these signs of Allah when the man looked towards the city he saw it populated and full of life. Then, expressing his devotion, he confessed, "Without any doubt, all this

is possible for Thy absolute power, and what I believed in faith before, I now believe also as seeing with my eyes.”

أَوْ كَمَا لَدَيْ مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيَى هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ ۖ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ ۖ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ۖ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ ۖ وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا ۖ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ ۖ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (بقره ب ۳ ع ۳۵)

Or (bethink thee of) the like of him who, passing by a township, which had fallen into utter ruin exclaimed: How shall Allah give this township life after death? And Allah made him die a hundred years, then brought him back to life. He said, How long hast thou tarried? (The man) said, I have tarried a day or part of a day. (He) said, Nay but thou hast tarried for a hundred years. Just look at thy food and drink which have not rotted, and look at thine ass. And that We make thee a token unto mankind, look at the bones, how We adjust them and then cover them with flesh. And when the matter became clear unto him he said, I know now that Allah is able to do all things. (al Baqar 259)

The question arises: who was this man? The common opinion is that it was the prophet Uzayr, Ezra in the Bible, whom Allah had commanded to proceed to Jerusalem which Allah said, He would populate again. When Uzayr arrived in Jerusalem, he found it in such utter ruin that he wondered, being after all human, how such desolation could be brought to life again!

These words were not a question but an expression of surprise in search of the means by which Allah would fulfill His promise. But Allah did not approve even of this thinking, because it should have been enough for him to believe that Allah had made a promise and so would abide by it. He had, therefore, to go through what has been narrated above. By the time he was brought back to life, Jerusalem had been populated again.

Ali Murtaza, Abdullah b. Abbas, Abdulllah b. Salam, radi Allah u Ta'la anhum, and Qatada, Sulayman, and Hasan are of the same opinion.¹ But

¹ Tafsir e Ibn Kathir, vol. 1, p.314 and Tarikh e Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p. 43

Wahab, b. Munabbah, Abdullah b. ʿObayd and, in another version, Abdullah b. Salam think that this person was the prophet 'Jeremiah', Ibn Jarir Tibri gives preference to this and we too agree with it.²

The reason is that since the Qur'an does not mention any name nor is there any Tradition from the Prophet ﷺ to guide us, and what has come down to us from the Companions is traceable to Wahab b. Munabbah, Ka'b Ahbar and Abdullah b. Salam who have borrowed their source from the Old Testament, we too have but one source left to us for our investigation, namely the Old Testament regarding the identity of the man. A study of its pages and historical statements reveals these details.³

The rebellion and mischief of the Children of Israel had gone beyond the limits of forbearance. Evil and persecution were rife everywhere. Then the prophet of the time Jeremiah was inspired to warn the people that they must forego their ways otherwise they would be destroyed like so many former communities.

Jeremiah did as he was commanded but the Israelis paid him no heed. Instead they increased in their ways and began ridiculing Jeremiah and threw him into prison. Even in this condition he told them that they would be destroyed at the hands of the king of Babylonia; that he would take them as captives to his country and Jerusalem would be razed to the ground.⁴

In about the seventh century before Christ, Nebuchadnazzar appeared in Babylonia and by his despotic power overcame the neighbouring kingdoms, and within a short period, invading Jerusalem three times, laid it utterly waste; and making captives of its people led them to Babylon. He burnt all copies of the Torah so that not one copy was left with them.

When Nebuchadnazzar was getting the houses vacated and making captives of their occupants someone told him that there was a man, Jeremiah, in the city prison who had warned these people long before the invasion but they paid him no heed and imprisoned him. Nebuchadnazzar ordered that Jeremiah be released and brought before him. After conversing with him, he offered to take him to Babylon where he was promised he would be treated with honour. But Jeremiah said that when his people were going in such disgrace, he preferred

² Tafsir and Tarikh Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p. 44.

³ Tarikh e Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, pp.42-46

⁴ Jeremiah

his present condition to living in honour.⁵ And he took up his abode in the wilderness. It is in the Book Jeremiah that he made the prophecy while there and sent it in writing to his people that they would live in captivity for seventy years and return to Jerusalem after this period.⁶

A long time after Nebuchadnazzar's death, Chosroes of Persia, in about 539 B.C. liberated them from the terrible persecution inflicted on them by Belshazar, the Babylon king, and permitted them to rebuild Jerusalem.

After the conquest of Babylon, Chosroes lived for about ten years during which the Children of Israel rebuilt Jerusalem but they could not complete the work in his lifetime. It appears from the Book Uzayr that because of undue interference of the officers, they had to discontinue their work twice for some time, and it was not till after Chosroes, and then Dara, and Urdsher that the rebuilding was completed and Jerusalem appeared to flourish more than ever before.

After these details, we are led to conclude that in between the time that Nebuchadnazzar destroyed Jerusalem until after it was completely rehabilitated in Urdsher's time, there is a long period, which is that interval when Jeremiah went through the events described in Surah al Baqar.

It appears from the circumstances that after Jeremiah refused to go to Babylon with Nabuchadnezzar and pained at Jerusalem's destruction, he went into the wilderness to pass his days in seclusion. Allah must have commanded him through inspiration to go and live in that desolate place which, though lay today in ruins because of the evil deeds of the Children of Israel, had for ages been the cradle of prophets, and that Allah would bring it back to life again. When Jeremiah, on Allah's command, arrived in Jerusalem, and fully surveyed the destruction he wondered, exclaiming with his tongue or in his heart with pity and remorse, what could possibly be the media to give life again to this dead city. Then came to pass what has been described in the Verses under consideration and quoted above. It will not be improper if we add to this that Allah seeing that it would take a long time for Jerusalem to flourish again, it will be unbearable for Jeremiah to live in seclusion away from his people, therefore, Allah's compassion made an excuse of his questioning and gave him temporary death for the period and brought him back to life after Jerusalem flourished with life again as before.

al Bidaya wa al Nihaya, vol. 2, pp. 38-39 and Tarikh Ibn Khuldun and Encyclopaedia of Islam

Jeremiah Ch. 15, verse 1.

The estimate of Jeremiah's age during the time taken by these events is about one hundred and fifty years, which is not astonishing for those times. This is supported by Isaiah's prophecy which he made a hundred and fifty years before about Cyrus the liberator of the Children of Israel.⁷

Jeremiah appeared close to Isaiah's passing away, therefore, Israel's intervening period must have been related to Jeremiah. As opposed to this, the details given in the Old Testament and Hebrew lore about Uzayr show that at time of the captivity he was in his childhood and lived in Babylon with other Israelis and at forty years of age he was acknowledged as a law-giver and was appointed a prophet there. He was in the forefront in the deputations that waited on Dara and Urdsher to plead against those who obstructed the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The rediscovery of the Torah after Jerusalem was the result of his efforts. In short, from the time of the captivity up to the liberation of the Israelis and the reconstruction of Jerusalem, Uzayr is seen with the Children of Israel.

These are the facts which have given us the courage to hold the popular version as incorrect and the correct as preferable. But only Allah knows the truth!

Besides the two versions quoted above, there are other opinions, for instance, it might have been Ezekiel, or some other person.⁸

Writing on the benefits of the commentary on Surah al-Kahf, Maulana Azad translates the events described in Surah al Baqar as Ezekiel's apocalypse.⁹

We are surprised that in view of the Qur'an having very clearly stated that Allah on High made a person sleep in the lap of death for a certain period of time and then brought him back to life and asked him how long he had slept and when the man could not give an accurate answer, Allah corrected him and pointed out to him to witness such and such things, how could Maulana make Ezekiel's apocalypse a commentary or interpretation of these events!

Reflect that a holy personage passes through a destroyed township which at one time was bubbling with life and full of people.

أَوْكَالِدِي مَرَعَلِي قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا

⁷ Isaiah Ch. 4, verse 28

⁸ Tafsir e Ibn Kathir. vol. 1, p. 314

⁹ Tafsir Tarjuman ul Qur'an, vol. 2

Looking down on it he says in his heart or by tongue,

“How will this dead place be ever brought to life again!”

قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيَىٰ هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

Then Allah gives him death, and keeping him dead for a hundred years, brings him back to life again *فَأَمَّا تَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ* and asks him, “How long have you been here?” He answers, “A day or, perhaps, part of a day.” *قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُ*. Because the answer was wrong, Allah corrects him, and says, “No, you have been asleep in the lap of death for one hundred years *قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ*. And then shows him manifestations of His absolute power that, on the one side, his food is fresh and unaffected by seasonal changes and on the other, his riding-ass has rotted away leaving only a skeleton of bones; *فَانظُرْ إِلَىٰ طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ*. And then Allah says, “We have done all this only to make you a portent for others *وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ*. And He shows the man how the ass’s bones assemble together, then flesh covers them and then skin and then the animal stands up on its legs *وَأَنْظُرْ إِلَىٰ الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ هَآئِمٌ*. After witnessing all this, when to belief by faith is added belief by seeing, the man at once admits that means are not necessary for Allah’s absolute power. He can do without hindrance whatever He wills. Nothing can stand in His way. *فَلَمْ تَبَيِّنْ لَهُ، قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ()*”

Reflect again on these verses and think whether the Qur’an has stated these happenings as actual facts or metaphorically in the abstract as an apocalypse. Can similarity between Ezekiel’s revelation and these Verses justify an identity? By no means.

But it may be correct to say that if these events took place with Jeremiah, there is also approaching it a revelation of Ezekiel stated in the Book of his name in the Old Testament. In this revelation Ezekiel saw the dried up bones of the Children of Israel come to life again, and Allah told him that this implied that the Children of Israel had despaired of living again in Jerusalem, but He informs them through Ezekiel that this shall be!¹⁰

¹⁰ Ezekiel Ch. 37, verse 1-14

Uzayr and belief in sonship of Allah —

We have said above that when Nebuchadnazzar had destroyed Jerusalem and carried away its people as animals, he also burnt all existing copies of the Torah, so that the Israelis had neither a copy left with them nor memory of it to help them to preserve the Book from beginning to end. But when they were liberated and returned to Jerusalem, they thought of finding it somehow. Then Uzayr assembled the Israelis and read out to them the whole Torah from beginning to end.

Some Hebrew folklore tell us that when Uzayr assembled the people, there came down two bright meteors from the skies and sank into Uzayr's bosom. It was then that he compiled the Torah anew and presented it to the people, who¹¹ expressed their delight and in their hearts Uzayr's position became all the more exalted.

But gradually this love passed into error and they began to call him 'son of Allah', just as, later, the Christians looked upon Jesus as His son. For their belief, a group of the Israelis advanced the logic that the Scripture Moses brought was written on tablets, but the Torah Uzayr produced was not written on any tablet of stone but word for word on the tablet of his bosom which he read out to them. This could be possible only if Uzayr was Allah's son! (Allah forbid).¹²

A reply to a suspicion —

Today, some Jews object to this proclamation of the Qur'an and deny that they look upon Uzayr as Allah's son. But this is sheer deception and concealment of facts. Otherwise, they know and everyone else knows who is interested in the research of world religions and has travelled through Muslim countries that even today there is a sect in Palestine that looks upon Uzayr as Allah's son and has images of Uzayr which they adore just as Roman Catholics adore idols of Jesus Christ.

Uzayr's blessed life —

There is not much to be found about Uzayr's life in biographical literature or historical documents. The Old Testament, too, does not provide much on the subject. Its greater part is devoted to the captivity and related matters but we do learn that at the time of Nebuchadnazzar's invasion of Jerusalem he was of

¹¹ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya, vol. 2, p. 45

¹² al Bidaya wa al Nihaya, vol.2, p. 45

small age and at the age of forty was declared a jurist, *faqih*, and later appointed prophet, and he with the Israeli prophet Najmiah performed the duties of giving guidance to the Children of Israel and in Urdsher's time he used his influence in the imperial court to solve the difficulties faced by the Israelis in connection with the rebuilding of Jerusalem.¹³

The authorities who relate the events of Surah al Baqar with Uzayr give some more details quoted from Abdullah b. Salam and Ka'b Ahbar and as such Ibn Kathir in his history and some commentators have also copied them.

In Solomon's narrative, we have quoted an authentic Tradition that some prophet having been bitten by an ant burnt up the entire ant-hole in anger. Allah was wrathful and reprimanded the prophet telling him that in retaliation for one ant biting him, it was not justifiable for him to burn up all the ants. Ibn Kathir on the authority of Ishaq b. Bashir tells us that Mujahid Ibn Abbas and Hasan Basri and others say that this prophet was Uzayr.¹⁴

Other events connected with Uzayr are also narrated but they are unreliable, even absurd. After mentioning them, Ibn Kathir and others have rejected their occurrence.¹⁵

Uzayr as prophet--

The narratives, which make Uzayr out to be the subject of the Verses concerned, also say that Uzayr was not a prophet but simply a righteous man. The majority, however, believe that he was a prophet. The style in which the Qur'an refers to him also indicates that he was a prophet, but that the Jews have made him a "son of Allah" just as the Christians have made Jesus "son of Allah". The Old Testament, too, holds him to be a prophet.

Those who take Uzayr to be the subject of the Verses of the Qur'an and yet deny that he was a prophet should reflect that in the Verses of Surah al Baqar, Allah addresses him directly, without any medium, and converses with him. This alone is proof that he was a prophet.

In short, there are two thoughts regarding Uzayr being a prophet; the correct and preferable one is that he was a prophet.

¹³ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya, vol. 1, p 42

¹⁴ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya and Tarikh e Tibri

¹⁵ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya, vol. 2, p. 47

Parentage--

There are also differences of opinion regarding his parentage and genealogy but it is agreed on all sides that he was descended from Haroon b. Imran.

Ibn Asakir gives his father's name as Jarwah, but some as Surique and some as Surikha. The Book Uzayr in the Old Testament gives his name as Khalqiya.

Death and tomb--

Quoting from Wahab b. Munabbah, Ka'b Ahbar, Abdullah b. Salam, Ibn Kathir, in his long narrative about Uzayr, says that Uzayr rewrote the Torah in Der-e-Hazqil in Iraq and he died in its precincts at a township, Sairabad.¹⁶ In another place, he says that according to some records his grave is in Damascus.¹⁷

Lessons--

Those individuals, who look upon Uzayr's narrative as a historical fact instead of a mere story, can deduce important lesson from it and might even hold these as part of it.

- a) However great progress man might make or to whatever heights he may rise, he always remains but a servant of Allah and can never be Allah or son of Allah because Allah is *la sharika-lahu*, has none as associate or to participate with Him and He transcends father and son relationship. It is man's greatest mistake that when he sees some extra ordinary performance coming from someone he either overawed or out of faith in him, proclaims that this being is god in human form, an *avatar*, or son of Allah. He does not think that such performance at the performer's hands comes only as a portent of Allah's absolute power. Yet, he is neither Allah nor son of Allah, but just a close servant of Him. Such performance takes place according to His law only in support of him and of his truthfulness, otherwise he is just as helpless as anybody else. That is why the Qur'an very forcefully forbids such error.
- b) The event mentioned in Surah al Baqar is stated in proximity with the other which tells us that once Abraham asked Allah to show him how He brought the dead to life. Allah asked him whether he

¹⁶ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya, vol. 2, p. 45

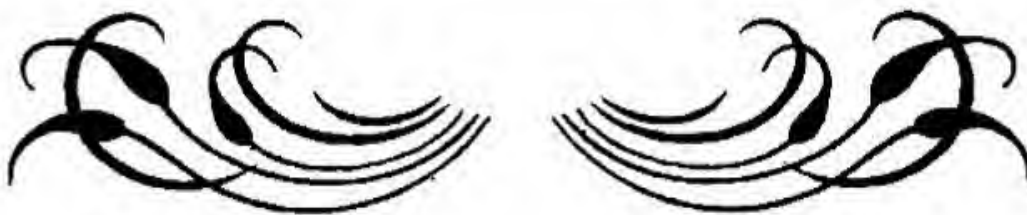
¹⁷ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya, vol. 2, p. 43

disbelieved this. Abraham humbly said that he believed but he wanted to know for the consolation of his heart. The two incidents are stated close to one another so that it may be made clear that such questions on the part of the prophets are not because they doubt the coming to life after death, but that knowledge by faith, *ilm ul yaqeen*, may rise to the grade of knowledge by seeing, *ain ul yaqeen*, and still higher, *haq ul yaqeen*. That is, just as they believe in their hearts, they may also believe as having seen with their own eyes, so that they conduct their mission and invitation in the best of ways and in their responsibilities of guiding Allah's creatures aright no stage of faith is omitted therein, howsoever high, that is not theirs.

- c) The world is a place for action, and the world of retribution is another, the Hereafter, but Allah's law and practice are that tyranny and pride are two deeds for which the tyrant and the proud are punished in this very life specially if these characteristics dominate the whole nation instead of being confined to certain individuals,

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ()

At the same time it should be understood that the life and death age of nations is separate from that of individuals and, therefore, no brave and steadfast person should despair because of the delay in the punishment of misdeeds because the Divine law of retribution is inevitable.



HAZRAT ZIKRYA

(Zecharia) ﷺ

The Qur'an mentions Zikrya's name in four Surahs, A'al e Imran, 'Al An'am, Maryam, and Al Anmbiya, in the following Verses:

<u>Sr.#.</u>	<u>Surah</u>	<u>Verse</u>	<u>No. of times</u>
1.	A'al e Imran	37-41	5
2.	Al An'am	85	1
3.	Maryam	2-11	10
4.	Al Anmbiya	89-90	2
Total			18

Of these, in al An'am only his name is mentioned in a list of some other prophets, and in the remaining three, brief details are also given.

Zikrya mentioned in the Qur'an is not the one of the Old Testament Book of his name who appeared during the time of Darius.¹ "In the eighth month of the second year of Darius the word of Allah came to Zikrya son of Berechia, son of Iddo the Prophet." Darius or Dara comes 500 years before Christ because he ascended the throne after the death of Kaikobad b. Kiachosroes in 521 B.C. Zikrya mentioned in the Qur'an is a contemporary of Jesus the Messiah and guardian of Jesus's mother Mary. Between him and his son Yahya, there was no prophet.²

There is no certainty about the name of Zikrya's father. Hafiz Ibn Hajar, in Fath ul Bari, and Ibn Kathir in his Commentary and History have quoted all the names borrowed from Ibn Asakir: Zikrya b. Dan, or b. Shabvi, or b. Ludan, or Ibn Barkia b. Muslim,³ or b. Sadooque, or b. Jashan, or b. Daud, or b. Sulayman, b. Muslim b. Siddiqa, b. Barkhya, b. Bila'ata, b. Nahor, b. Shalom, b. Bahfashat, b. Einamin b. Raja'am, b. Suleiman b. Daud. But what

¹ Ch.1, Verse 1

² Fath ul Bari, vol. 2, p. 365

³ Fath ul Bari, vol. 6, and Tarikh e Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p. 47

is certain and unanimously agreed is that he descended from Sulayman son of Daud, (Solomon son of David).⁴

Details are not known about his life but whatever we do have from the Qur'an and reliable historical chronicles is, as stated before, that priests comprised a highly respected position among the Children of Israel. They performed the duties attached to the chief temple and the ceremonies and the tribes had their own priests who performed the duties by turns.

Zikrya was one of the priests and, according to the Qur'an, also a prophet.

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَإِيلَاسَ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ()

Zikrya and John, Jesus and Ilyas are all of the righteous men.

In Luke's Gospel he is mentioned as a priest.⁵

"In the days of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zikrya of the Divison of Abiah, and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before Allah, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."⁶

But the Gospel of St. Barnabas very clearly states that he was a prophet. Addressing the Jews, Jesus says:

"The time is near when the curse of the prophets you slew unjustly shall fall on you, and you slew Zikrya in the synagogue."⁷

Zikrya was of the descendants of David and his wife Eisha or Eleisha was a descendant of Aaron.⁸

⁴ Tarikh Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p. 47

⁵ Separate from these were the *kahins* of Arabia who during the early period of Islam were soothesayers, foretellers of future events. Islam forbade paying heed to them.

⁶ Ch. 1, verses 5.6.

⁷ Apart from the four Gospels, that of St. Barnabas, an apostle of Jesus, is the fifth. A copy of it was preserved in the library of Pope Sextus, from where a bishop had it published and he became a Muslim because it contains prophecies of the advent of the Prophet ﷺ.

⁸ Fath ul Bari, vol. 6, Tarikh Ibn Kathir, vol. 2

As stated before, every prophet announced to his people that for his mission of guidance he asked them for no compensation. His compensation was in the hands of Allah.

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ()

Zikrya too earned his own livelihood. His profession for this purpose was carpentry, as stated by Muslim, Ibn Maja and Ahmed.

عن ابى هريرة ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال كان
زكريا نجاراً (الحديث)

"Abu Hurayra reports: The Prophet ﷺ said that Zikrya did
carpentry work." (Al Hadithe)

Of the same family, descendants of Solomon, son of David, were Imran b. Nashi and his wife Hannah d. Faqood and both lived pious lives," but had no children of their own. As will come later in the chapter on Jesus, Hannah prayed and a daughter was born to her whom she named Maryam (Mary). In fulfilment of her vow she dedicated the infant as an offering for life-service to the Temple. As such, the child had to be looked after by one of the priests. Since so many wanted to assume the responsibility, it was decided after drawing lots that Zikrya should be the one to shoulder it.

وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا () (آل عمران) وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذِ اتُّلِقُونَ أَقْلًا مَهُمْ
أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذِ اتَّخَصِمُونَ ()

*Thou wast not present with them when they threw their pens
to know which of them would be the guardian of Maryam,
nor wast thou present with them when they quarelled
(thereupon). (A'le Imran: 44)*

Scholars say that otherwise too Zecharia had the right to be the child's guardian because her mother and his wife Elizabeth were sisters,¹⁰ and a mother's sister is looked upon as being in the mother's place, as the Prophet ﷺ himself pronounced in respect of Ammarah, Hamza's daughter, that she

¹⁰ Fath ul Bari, Vol. 6, Page. 364.

¹¹ Fath ul Bari, vol. 6, p. 364

should be looked after by Jafar's wife because she was a sister of the girl's mother. "Wal khala bi manzilaht-ul umm."¹¹

When Mary became mature of intelligence, Zikrya allotted her seclusion near the synagogue, where she spent the day in devotion, and returned to her aunt at nightfall.

Whenever Zikrya came to her apartment, he would notice that there were out of season fruits there. One day he asked her in surprise, "From where have these come, Mary?", and she told him, "They are from the bounty of my Lord. He gives to whomsoever He wills without stint."

كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَمْرُؤُومُ
أَنَّى لَكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ

(ب ٣)

حِسَابٍ (١)

Whenever Zikrya went into the sanctuary where she was, he found that she had food. He said, Mary! Whence cometh unto thee this (food)? She answered, it is from Allah. Allah giveth without stint to whom He will. (A'l e Imran : 36)

Mujahid, Akrama, Saeed b. Jabeer, Zahhak, Qatada, Ibrahim Nakhai, interpret the *rizq* or food Zikrya used to see there as meaning out of season fruit.¹²

Zikrya had no child, and besides the feeling of being childless, he was anxious that there being none among his relatives to carry on his mission of guidance, if Allah gave him a son, he would be at peace in this regard¹³ but since his age now was seventy according to Ibn Kathir, or ninety or ninety-two, or a hundred-and-twenty, according to Tha'ibi,¹⁴ and his wife was barren, he was despaired of ever being endowed with the fruit of life, a son. But when he saw out of season fruit with Mary, and that Allah was so bounteous to her, he thought in his agitated heart that if Allah could do all this for Mary, He would certainly be providential with him too. Thus he realised that his despair was ill-founded. He, then, prayed to Allah, "O Lord! I am alone, and desirous of

¹¹ Bukhari

¹² Tafsir e Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p 360

¹³ Fath ul Bari, vol. 6, p. 364

¹⁴ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya, vol. 2, p. 4

an heir, though of course, Thou art the real heir. Grant me, O' Lord, a righteous offspring. I believe that Thou dost hear the prayer of the needy."

This prayer, a prayer not for himself but for the people's guidance, was heard immediately. So when Zikrya was at his devotions in the synagogue, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and gave him the tidings that he would be given a son whom he would name John Yahya.

Zikrya was very happy and in surprise asked the angel, how the tidings would be fulfilled; whether he would be given youth again or the barrenness of his wife would be cured. The angel answered, "All I can say is that whatever might be, a son would definitely be born to your wife, because Allah's decision is final and He says this is very easy for Him". That is, He may choose any way He desires. Had He not risen Zikrya to life when he was a non-being?" Zikrya prayed that he be granted a sign convincing him that good tidings would take the shape of a *being*. Allah said, "When you are unable to talk for three days, and express yourself only by signs, then understand that the happy tidings have become *being*; but during these days occupy yourself more in devotional prayers. So when the time came, Zikrya became more devotional in remembrance of Allah; and also signed to the people that they engage themselves in similar remembrance, for, just as the news of the birth of John brought great felicity to Zikrya, so was it a source of joy for the people, that the advent of a suitable heir to Zikrya, a true bearer of wisdom was about to take place.

This is what has come to us from the Qur'an and authentic Traditions and may be looked upon as reliable. Besides, they tally with the Hebrew sources, most of which correspond with the Islamic Traditions though some are not dependable or may be unintelligible and inauthentic.

We have in Surah e Maryam:

كهیصص () ذِكْرُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُ، زَكَرِيَّا () اِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ، نِدَاءً
خَفِيًّا () قَالَ رَبُّ اِنِّى وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّى وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّاسُ شَيْئًا وَّلَمْ
اَكُنْ بِدُعَاؤِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا وَاِنِّى خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِىَ مِنْ وَّرَآءِى
وَكَانَتْ اِمْرَاَتِى عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِى مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَاٰتِىَا () يَرْثِى وَاِثْرُ مِنْ
الِ يَعْقُوْبَ ۗ وَاَجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا () يَزَكَرِيَّا اِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ ۗ اَسْمُهُ
يَحْيٰى ۗ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا () قَالَ رَبُّ اِنِّى يَكُوْنُ لِىْ غُلَامٌ
وَكَانَتْ اِمْرَاَتِى عَاقِرًا وَّقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا () قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ ۗ

قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَىٰ هَيْنٍ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْئًا () قَالَ
 رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً ۗ قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ()
 فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً
 وَعَشِيًّا () (مريم ب ١٦ ع ١)

Ka Ha Ya Ain Sa'd. A mention of the mercy of his Lord unto his servant Zikrya. When he cried unto his Lord, a cry in secret, saying, my Lord! The bones of me wax feeble, and my head is shining with grey hair, and I have never been unblest in prayer to Thee, my Lord. Lo! I fear my kinsfolk after me, since my wife is barren. O Lord! give me from Thy presence a successor! who shall inherit me and inherit (also) the house of Yaqoob. And make him, my Lord, acceptable (unto Thee). (It was said unto him) O Zikrya! Lo! We bring thee tidings of a son John. We have given the same name to none before him. He said, my Lord, how can I have a son? when my wife is barren and I have reached infirm old age? "He said, so it will be. Thy Lord sayeth it is easy for Me, even as I created thee before when thou wast naught. He said, appoint for me some token. He said, Thy token is that thou with no bodily defect, shalt not speak unto mankind three nights. Then he came forth unto his people from the sanctuary, and signified to them: Glorify your Lord at break of day and fall of night. (Maryam :1-11)

وَزَكَرِيَّا إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ ()
 فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ، وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ، يَحْيَىٰ وَاصْلَحْنَا لَهُ، زَوْجَهُ، ۗ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
 يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا ۗ وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَشِيعِينَ ()
 (انبیاء ب ١٧ ع ٦)

And Zikrya when he cried unto his Lord: O Lord! leave me not childless, Lo! Thou art the best of inheritors! Then We heard his prayer and bestowed on him John, and adjusted his wife (to bear a child) for him. Lo! They used to vie one with the other in good deeds. And they cried unto us in longing and in fear, and were submissive unto Us.

(al Anmbiyah: 89-90)

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ، قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً
 إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ () فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي
 الْمِحْرَابِ أَنْ اللَّهُ يُشْرِكُ بِبِحْيِ مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا
 وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ () قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ
 بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ () قَالَ
 رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آتَيْكَ آيَةً تَكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمَزًا
 وَادْكُرُ رَبَّكَ كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ()

(آل عمران ب ٣ ع ٤)

Then Zikrya prayed unto his Lord, and said, my Lord! bestow upon me of Thy bounty goodly offspring. Lo! Thou art the Hearer of prayer! And the angels called to him as he stood praying in the sanctuary: Allah giveth thee glad tidings of (a son whose name is) John, who cometh to confirm a word from Allah, lordly chaste, a prophet of the righteous. He said, O Lord! how can I have a son when age hath overtaken me already and my wife is barren? (The angel) answered: So (it will be). Allah doth what He willeth! he said, my Lord! Appoint a token for me. (The angel) said: The token unto thee (shall be) that thou shalt not speak unto mankind three days except by signs. Remember thy Lord much, and praise (Him) in the early hours of night and morning.

(A'le Imran 38-4)

As stated in Surahs A'al e Imran and Maryam, Zikrya, was surprised at hearing the tidings of the birth of a son because he was of old age and his wife was barren. Shah Abdul Qadir has an interesting comment on this. He says, "Zikrya was not astonished praying for an unusual thing; but when he was told that it shall be, he was surprised."

In our previous discussions it has been stated in several places that by asking such questions it is not implied that the prophets doubt the absolute power of Allah to do a thing, but that it would be better if they were told how the particular miracle of Allah's power would come to pass. But because outwardly it seems that they are anxious about it, it has been Allah's way --- sunnah--- to answer in such a manner as to warn them that although, being after all human, their questioning is not punishable, it is below their status that

being so very near the Divine, they should express any surprise. This is what Shah Abdul Qadir means by his two brief phrases.

But an answer is also given to the basic spirit of the question so that their hearts may be satisfied. Here too, first a reply is given corresponding to Zikrya's astonishment and the unobstructable power of the Divine Being is asserted, then a reply is given to the spirit of Zikrya's question:

وَأَصْلَحْنَا لَهُ زَوْجَهُ

"We cured his wife of her malady."

2. We have in Surah Maryam that praying for a child, Zikrya said,

يَرْتُنِّي وَيَرِثُ مِنِّي أَلِ يَعْقُوبَ

"One who will inherit me and Yaqoob."

Here by inheritance is implied the inheritance of wisdom and prophethood, as also related in the case of Daud and Suleman. Zikrya owned no property and earned his livelihood as a carpenter, and; therefore, could not be desirous of leaving his wealth to an heir. Had this been his intention it would have been sufficient for him to say "inherit of me", To say "inherit of Yaqoob" would be meaningless, for the child could not possibly be heir of all of Yaqoob's property.

3. *أَيْتُكَ أَنْ لَأُتَكَلَّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا* are words in Surahs A'al e Imran and Maryam. Our commentary on them is according to the majority opinion. Abdullah ibn Abbas, Akrama, Mujahid, Qatada and others write their comment as follows:

اعتقل لسانه من غير مرض ولا علة وقال زيد بن اسلم من غير

خرس ولا يستطيع ان يكلم قومه الا اشارة

"He had become tongue-tied without any physical ailment; And Zayd b. Aslam says that his tongue without any disease had become dumb, and was unable to move, so that he had to communicate by signs only"¹⁵

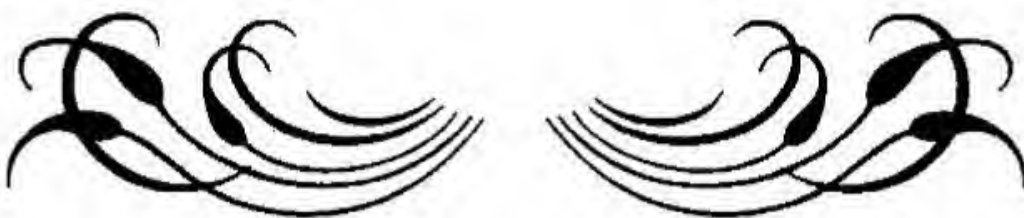
However, there are two opinions about the word *saviyan* in this Verse: one is that the word mans 'correct', and the other that it means 'continuous'. The former is that of the majority, and Oofi quoting from another Tradition from Abdullah ibn Abbas has copied the other version. Hafiz Imad-ud-din prefers that of the majority.

Luke's Gospel also mentions the event, and it corresponds with the majority version.¹⁶ "And Zikrya said to the angel, how shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years. And the angel answered him, I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of Allah; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you the good news. And behold you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass".

As distinct from the majority, Maulana Azad's comment is that Zikrya was told that after the manner of Israeli fasting, he was to refrain from eating and drinking, and such, for three days and also remain speechless. Then the time for the present tidings would commence. After quoting the lines from Luke as given above, he writes: "The Qur'an does not say that he had become dumb. Such commentaries are of latter days, which cropped up as usual. The clear implication seems to be that Zikrya was commanded to fast and worship; and silence was quite customary in Jewish fasting."

Though these comments may be correct, according to Arabic, they are not acceptable to us, because they are opposed to the majority version of early scholars. As for not becoming dumb, no one has ever suggested that Zikrya had been subjected to such an ailment, but, that in spite of remaining free of any such defect, he had been made tongue-tied by Allah's command as a token.

4. Commenting on the words *وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا* in Surah A'al e Imran, one opinion is that here the word *rizq* implies knowledge and wisdom, but we do not accept this view also because the clear meaning is that which is quoted from the majority of early scholars.



¹⁶ Luke Ch. 1, verses 10-20





The Mausoleum of Hazrat
Yahya عليه السلام (Jon) in Jamia Mosque - Damascus .



The Mausoleum of Hazrat Zakariyya عليه السلام in
Jerusalem in a Cemetery

HAZRAT YAHYA (JOHN) ﷺ

The Qur'an mentions Yahya in the Surahs In which it mentions Zikrya, that is, A'al e Imran, Maryam. al Ana'm, al Anmbiya. He is Zikrya's son, the answer to his prayer. His name, too, was proposed by Allah, never before given to any one in his family.

يَا زَكَرِيَّا إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ اسْمُهُ يَحْيَىٰ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ
سَمِيًّا (مریم ب ۱۶ ع ۱)

(It was said unto him) : O Zikrya! Lo! We bring thee tidings of a son whose name is Yahya: We have given the same name to none before(him)
(Maryam/ 7)

Life-

Malik b. Anas believes that Zikrya's son Yahya and Mary's son Jesus were conceived by their respective mothers during the same period, while Imam Tha'ibi thinks that Yahya was six months before.¹ We have in Luke's Gospel that when Zikrya's wife Elizabeth was pregnant six months, an angel of the Lord appeared to Mary and gave her tidings of the birth of Jesus.

"And behold your kinswoman Elizabeth, in her old age has also conceived a son, and this the sixth month with her who was called barren."²

These quotations show that Yahya was six months older than Jesus.

When Zikrya had prayed for an heir, he had asked for a virtuous one. The prayer, the Qur'an tells us, was heard, and Yahya grew up to be an embodiment of flawless character. He never married nor did the thought of sin ever come to his mind. Like his father he was an eminent prophet whom Allah imbued with knowledge and wisdom in his very childhood. His greatest work was to prophesy the advent of Jesus and prepare the ground for the coming guidance:

¹ Fath ul Bari, vol.6, p.364

² Ch. I, Verse 36

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ
بِيَحْيَى مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (٤)
(آل عمران ب ٣ ع ٤)

And the angels called to him as he stood praying in the sanctuary : Allah giveth thee glad tidings of (a son whose name is) Yahya, (who cometh) to confirm a word from Allah, lordly, chaste, a prophet of the righteous. (A'al e Imran/ 39)

The books give several meanings to the word 'sayer' as used here: 'gentle', 'wise', 'interpreter of law', 'chief of both worlds', 'noble', 'abstemious' 'likable to Allah and elevated'. We have selected the last, because it comprehends all the implications.³

Similarly, *husoor* also has several meanings: one who never goes near a woman' 'one protected against all manner of sin and the danger of sin never even crosses his heart', 'one who has his desires completely under his control.'⁴

In our opinion, all these meanings are mere interpretations of the same thing. In its lexicon meaning *hasar* means an 'obstacle, and '*husoor*' is 'noun subjective'. Therefore, the word here means that one for whom it is necessary to stop himself against things forbidden by Allah is *husoor*. Yahya possesses all these virtues in his person to perfection.

As against these meanings, some take the word *husoor* to imply being deprived of masculine power. Such a meaning is not applicable here because it is derogatory to the man, not praiseworthy of him. Scholars have condemned it. Qazi Ayaz in *Shifa* and Khafaji in *Naseem ul Riyaz* have strongly censured it, supporting the majority opinion as correct.

However, Allah's devotees have always had recourse to two methods for retaining their strength: one, bachelorhood and with exercise mortifying the sensual appetites for ever. This is conspicuous in Jesus's life, while Allah had created this attribute in Yahya without his having to exercise for it.

The second way is to keep it under control to such an extent that it never even for a moment gets into motion, there is even no risk of it, yet it had recourse to for reproduction of the species.

³ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p. 361

⁴ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p. 361

Although the former way is praiseworthy in some conditions. It is not proper for human nature and collective living. It was adopted by some prophets for particular requirements of the time, specially, if their invitation was confined to certain communities, but for collective living, only the other course satisfies the demands of nature. That is why the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ and his practice support this. When his advent was "sufficient for all mankind", *kaafat-un bil-nas*, it should have precedence in the religion brought by him. He has time and again, drawn attention to this truth in life's various aspects, that comparison with living in seclusion in caves and mountains or jungles, his status is higher with Allah who, whilst living in the midst of the affairs of this world, does not even for a moment disobey Allah and keeps His commands in view at every step of the way.

يَسْحَىٰ حَذَىٰ الْكِتَابِ بِقُوَّةٍ ۖ وَأَتَيْنَهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا () وَحَنَانًا مِّن لَّدُنَّا
وَرِزْقًا وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا () وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُن جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ()
وَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُعْتَدُ حَيًّا ()

(مریم ب ۱۶ ع ۱)

(And it was said unto his son) : O Yahya! Hold fast the Scripture. And We gave him wisdom when he was a child, And compassion from Our presence and purity; and he was devout, and dutiful towards his parents. And he was not arrogant, rebellious. Peace on him the day he was born, and the day he dieth and the day he shall be raised alive!

(Maryam/ 12)

After the good news, the Qur'an, overlooking the events of his childhood which are not relevant to its purpose, tells us that Allah commanded him to act according to the Torah with great severity and guide the people according to it. Yahya was a *nabi*, not a *rasool*. We are also told, that, at the same time, Allah gave him wisdom in early childhood, unlike the other children, that he may soon become a *nabi*.

So when children of his age would ask him to come and play with them, he would tell them that Allah had not created him for sport and such.⁵ We are also told that he was made a *nabi* before he was thirty years of age.⁶

⁵ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya, vol. 2, p. 50.

⁶ Qasas ul Anmbiya from Najjar, p. 420.

This is the meaning of the words *wa aatainaa-hul hikma sabiyan* in the verses under consideration, as Abdullah b. Mubarak quotes from Muammar.⁷

It is wrong to assume that Yahya was made a *nabi* in his childhood, because such an assumption is neither according to commonsense nor is it derived from any authoritative source.

The prayers of blessings for Yahya mentioned in these verses are for three special occasions. The fact is that it is these three occasions which are the most delicate for any human being: one when he is born, separated from his mother's body and enters the world; two, when he bids farewell to this world and enters the *barzakh*, and three: when on Judgment Day he emerges from the *barzakh*, his grave, to receive his punishment or reward. Therefore, whoever is given the good news of blessings for each of these three occasions has, indeed, the blessings of both the worlds bestowed on him. *Fa tuba la-hu wa husnu ma'ab.*

It is written in Surah e Anmbiya

وَزَكَرِيَّا إِذْنَا دِي رَبِّهِ، رَبِّ لَّا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ ()
 فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ، وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ، يَحْيَىٰ وَأَصْلَحْنَا لَهُ، زَوْجَهُ، إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
 يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَشِيعِينَ ()
 (انبیاء ب ۱۷ ع ۶)

And Zikrya, when he cried unto his lord: My Lord! leave me not childless, though Thou art the best of inheritors. Then We heard his prayer and bestowed upon him Yahya, and adjusted his wife (to bear a child) for him.

Lo! they used to view one with the other in good deeds, and they cried unto Us in longing and in fear, and were submissive unto Us. (Anmbiya/89)

Mission--

It is recorded from Haaris Ashari in Musnad e Ahmed, Tirmizi, Ibn Maja and others that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah had commanded Yahya b. Zikrya specially about five things ;that he act upon them himself and also instruct his people to act on them. But there was some delay in Yahya executing the command. So Jesus said to him, 'Brother, if you are delaying the matter for

some reason, permit me to carry out the command'. Yahya said, 'If I permit you and not carry out the command myself, I fear that some punishment may overtake me or I may be sunk in the earth. So I shall begin'. And then he collected a congregation in the Temple and told them: 'I have been commanded five things which are:

First, that I worship none beside Allah nor associate any as partner with him because the example of such an associater, *mushrik*, is that of a slave who has been bought by his master's money but the slave hands over whatever he earns to another man. Now tell me would any of you like to own such a slave?


Now understand that Allah is He Who created you and He provides you with food; so worship Allah alone and associate no partner with Him.

The second command is that you offer your prayers to Him with humility and fear in your hearts. For as long as you think of no one else in your prayers, Allah will turn to you in His mercy and His pleasure.

The third command is that you fast; the person who fasts is that of one sitting in a company and he has a bag of musk with him the fragrance of which permeates him as well as his companions; and do not think of the odour of the fasting man's mouth because odour rises from a dry stomach, and in Allah's sight is cleaner than the fragrance of musk.

The fourth command is that you give charity out of your wealth. One who gives charity is like that of one who is caught unexpectedly by his enemies, who tie his hands to his neck and take him to slaughter, but he pleads with them in despair that they take his wealth as ransom for sparing his life, and they agree. He thus rescues his life in return for whatever he owns of wealth.

And the fifth command is that you keep remembrance of Allah day and night because such a person is like one who runs chased by his enemies until he finds a strong fortress and seeks shelter in it. There is no doubt that chased by Satan, the best refuge for man is remembrance of Allah.

The Prophet  then drew the attention of his Companions and said to them, "I too command five similar things to you: which Allah has commanded me; adherence to the Jama'at, (luzoom) audience, *sama'*, obedience, *ta'at*, migration, *hijrat*, and jihad fi sabilil-Lah. If any one separates from the Jama't even a spanful, he takes the cord of Islam from off his neck unless he adheres to the requirements of the jama't. And he who invites to the things of the times of ignorance, makes his abode in hell." Haris Ash'ari tells us that one of them asked, "Even if one adheres to prayers and fasting, he would be punished with hell?"

“Yes, even if one observes prayers and fasts’ replied the Prophet.⁸

Quoting from Hebrew literature, scholars say that the greater part of Yahya’s life was spent in the wilderness where he ate leaves and locusts, and it was there that he received the revelation. He then began his mission in the vicinity of the river Jordan and proclaimed the coming of Jesus, the Christ.

This is supported by Luke.⁹

“the word of God came to Yahya, the son of Zikrya in the wilderness, and went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”

Ibn Asakir has quoted some Traditions from Wahab b. Munabbah the gist of which is that Yahya was so over-whelmed with the fear of Allah that he would frequently weep and traces of his tears appeared on his cheeks. Once his father Zikrya went looking for him and finding him in the wilderness, said to him: “Son, We have been worried about you and have gone about searching for you, and you are sitting here shedding tears,” Yahya replied, “Father, you have told me that between heaven and hell is so great a field that it cannot be traversed without shedding tears for fear of Allah to reach heaven”. Hearing these words, Zikrya also began to weep.

Martyrdom—

When Yahya began his mission and proclaimed that a greater prophet than he was about to come, the Jews unable to tolerate his greatness or mission, became his enemies. They collected around him and asked if he were the Messiah. He said that he was not the Messiah. “Then, art thou that prophet?” they asked. This also he denied. Or “Elijah”. This too was denied. “Then who art thou to go about preaching and calling us?” He answered that he was a voice in the wilderness raised to invite to the truth. Hearing these words, the Jews were enraged and, finally, they martyred him.¹⁰

In al Mustaqsa fi Fazail ul Aqsa, Ibn Asakir has quoted a lengthy tradition from Amir Muaviya’s Maula Qasim in which Yahya’s martyrdom is stated thus:

⁸ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya, vol. 2, p. 50.

⁹ Ch. 3, Verse 1.

¹⁰ St. John’s Gospel, Ch.1, Verses. 19-20.

The king of Damascus Hedad b. Hedar had divorced his wife three times and wanted to marry her again. He asked Yahya to give his verdict in favour but Yahya told him that this was not permissible for him. The queen did not like this and decided to get rid of Yahya. She obtained the king's permission, and when Yahya was in prostration during his prayers in the Temple, he was slain and his head was brought to her on a platter, but even in this condition, the head severed from the body, kept on saying, "Thou art not permissible for the king until after thou hast married another man."

The woman was punished there and then, and she and the head were sunk into the earth.

This narrative contains a passage which makes the whole incredible; namely, that blood kept sprouting from Yahya's body until Bakht Nasar had conquered Damascus and slaughtered seventy-thousand Jews. Then the Prophet Jeremiah came and addressing the sprouting blood said:

"Wilt thou not stop flowing even now when so many of Allah's creation have perished? Stop!" And immediately the blood stopped flowing.¹¹

After quoting this story, Hafiz Ibn Hajar comments that its origin is Hakim's narrative which he has quoted in Mustadrak.

Any student of history will reject this part of the story without hesitation because Bakht Nasar lived centuries before Jesus. It is, therefore, surprising that eminent authorities like Hafiz Ibn Asakir and Hafiz Imaduddin b. Kathir should copy the story without comment. Besides, the extraordinary things mentioned in the story cannot be accepted unless proved. Hakim's story is impossible and without authenticity.

Place of martyrdom--

Authorities disagree on the place of Yahya's martyrdom. One version is that it was somewhere between the Temple and the sacrificial altar. Seventy prophets were martyred here. Sufyan Sauri has quoted this version from Samar b. Atiya.¹²

Abu Ubayda Qasim b. Salam, quoting from Saeed b. Musayyab, says that Yahya was martyred in Damascus, Ibn Kathir thinks that this can be correct if Ata and Hasan's version is accepted that Bakht Nasar was a contemporary of Jesus.¹³

¹¹ al Bidaya wa al Nihaya, vol. 2, p. 55.

¹² Tarikh Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p. 55.

¹³ Tarikh Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p. 55.

But we have already proved that historically and on the basis of any authenticity this is incorrect. Bakht Nasr lived centuries before Jesus, Ibn Kathir himself admits in his account of the destruction of Jerusalem and the prophet Ozayr. If such a wrong statement is accepted, it would follow that Jesus was not the last of the Israeli prophets, that there is no intervening period between Jesus and the Prophets, and such prophets as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Ozayr, who remained in prison until the end of Bakht Nasr's reign, appeared after Jesus; all of which is wrong historically as well as by common testimony of the Torah and Islamic sources.

However, that Yahya was martyred in Damascus and not in Jerusalem, is further supported by Zayd b. Waqid's account, quoted by Ibn Asakir on the authority of Walid bin Muslim, that when a mosque was being rebuilt below the Amood e Sakasika, he saw with his own eyes, Yahya's head emerge as the column of an arch to the east side. No change had overtaken the face or even the hair, and the smeared blood looked as if just spilt.

But how could it be said that it was Yahya's head, and not of some other holy personage?

There is no decisive verdict on this issue. All that is certain is that it were the Jews who martyred him, and when Jesus heard of his death, he launched upon his mission.

The Qur'an has recounted the mischief of the Jews in a number of places, even to the extent of killing their own prophets. In Surah e A'al e Imran we have:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيْنَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ
الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ()

(آل عمران ب ٣ ع ٣)

Lo! those who disbelieve the revelations of Allah, and slay the Prophets wrongfully and slay those of mankind who enjoin equity :promise them a painful doom.

(A'al e Imran/21)

On the authority of Abu Obayda b. al Jarrah, Ibn Abi Hatim has recorded the Prophet as saying that once the Israelis killed forty three prophets and one hundred and seventy reformers in one single day.¹⁴

¹⁴ Tafsir e Ibn Kathir, vol. 1, p. 255.

Zikrya's death--

Scholars, learned in history and religious literature, have always disagree whether Zikrya died a natural death or was martyred, and it is amusing to note that in either case, the ultimate authority is traced to Wahab b. Munabbah.!

In one of Munabba's traditions we have that when the Jews had martyred Yahya, they turned their attention to Zikrya, wanting to dispose of him also. When Zikrya saw them coming towards him, he ran and hid himself in the cleft hollow of a tree. But they found him, and, instead of forcing him to come out, began sawing the tree. When the saw came in touch with his skin Allah inspired him, that if he squirmed, Allah would turn the earth on him but if he bore it with patience, He would immediately send His punishment on his persecutors. Zikrya bore his torture with patience, the Jews cutting him in two¹⁵.

From the same Wahab, another tradition is that this took place with Sha'ya and that Zikrya was not martyred but died a natural death.¹⁶

However, it is popularly believed that Zikrya too was martyred, but in what manner and where, is known only to Allah.!

Night of Ascension and Zikrya--

In his account of the Night Journey, Bukhari mentions Zikrya only to tell us that the Prophet ﷺ met him in the second heaven.

فلما خلصتُ فاذا يحيى وعيسى وهما ابنا خالة قال هذايحيى
وعيسى فسلمتُ عليهما فسلمت فردائهم قال لام حبًا بالاخ الصالح
والنبي الصالح

When I arrived in the second heaven, I saw Zikrya and Jesus present there, and they are maternal cousins Gabriel told me that this was Zikrya and this Jesus, and that I salute them. I saluted them and they returned my salutation. Then both said. 'Welcome, our good brother and true prophet!'

We have shown in the account on Zikrya that Yahya's mother Elizabeth and Hannah, the lady Mary's mother, were sisters. The relation is spoken by the

¹⁵ Tarikh e Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p. 52.

¹⁶ Ditto. Kitab ul Anbiya

Prophet is only colloquial, and a mother's aunt is called aunt also by her children.

Yahya and the Scripture people—

We have already quoted from Luke's Gospel. The truth is that the Jews, in keeping with their mentality, deny Yahya altogether, but the Christians acknowledge him as the harbinger of Jesus Christ, and his father Zikrya only as a priest. With them, Yahya's name is Yuhanna. It is possible that in Hebrew it has the same meaning as the word Yahya and the pronunciation has changed by transfer to Arabic.

Luke's Gospel corresponds with the Qur'an that before him the name had not been given to any one. So his family folk were surprised when they heard of the name.¹⁷

"And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing Allah."

"Now Yahya wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle around his waist and his food was locusts and wild honey."¹⁸

We have in Yahya's Gospel about his mission:

"And this is the testimony of Yahya, when the Jews sent priests. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord."¹⁹

And in Luke:

"The word of the Lord came unto Yahya the son of Zikrya in the wilderness, and he went to all the region about the Jordan preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins". As it is written in the book of the word of the book of Isaiah, the prophet: The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight."²⁰

And in the same Gospel the words about his imprisonment are:

"So, with many other exhortations he preached, good news to the people. But Herod, the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's

¹⁷ Luke Ch. I, Verses. 64-65.

¹⁸ Ch.3, Verses. 4-5.

¹⁹ Ch.1, Verses. 19-22.

²⁰ Luke Ch. 3, Verses. 2-5.

wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he shut up Yahya in prison”²¹

And further on in the same Gospel his martyrdom is stated thus;

“Now Herod, the tetrarch, heard all that was done and he was perplexed because it was said by some that Yahya had been raised from the dead, by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen. Herod said, Yahya I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?”²²

Lessons--

Although discerning eyes will themselves find many lessons in the lives of Zikrya and Yahya, some are specially worth mentioning.

1) No one can be so hard-hearted and unfortunate as one who kills a holy personage who has done him no harm nor covets his wealth. Rather, without remuneration, renders all manner of services for reforming their lives by educating them in morality and performance of good deeds, such as benefit them both in this world and the next. On a question by Abu Obayda b. al Jarrah as to who would deserve the most punishment on Judgment Day, the Prophet ﷺ said :

قال: رجلٌ قتل نبيّاً او من امر بالمعروف و نهى عن المنكر

(الحديث)

“He who kills a Prophet or any person who orders good deeds and to refrain from evil.”²³

The Jews have the unique distinction of being the only people in the world who continued the disgraceful treatment of their prophets, even to the extent of killing them.

2) Because the Israelis were divided into tribes, and for this reason the centres of their small governments were separate, prophets appeared among them simultaneously, but for their education the Torah was common to them all. The status of these prophets vis a vis in relation to Moses was similar to

²¹ Ch.2, Verses. 18-19.

²² Luke 3, Verses. 18-19.

²³ Tafsir Ibn Kathir from b. Abi Hatim, vol. I, p. 255.

that of the righteous ulema in our umma relative to the Prophet ﷺ. Although the words of the Tradition, *ulama-o ummati ka ambiya e bani Israel*, may be doubtful, their meaning is clear and correct. As the lineage of prophets has been brought to its climax and finality with the Prophet ﷺ, the ummah's guidance until Judgment Day can vest only with the ulema whose position, except for prophethood, must be that of the Israeli prophets for the continuance of the teachings of Moses.

We have conditioned *ulema* with the word *haq*, *truth*, because there are also *ulama e su'* vicious ulema, who have been described by the Prophet ﷺ as *sharar ul khalq*, the 'most mischievous of the creation'. But let it be clear that just as following the *ulama e su'* is misleading for the ummah, far more is it destructive for religion to spread doubt and suspicion about *ulama e haq* among the ummah. make them butts of mockery and instead of referring to the Book of Allah and the Prophet's sunna for distinguishing between *su* and *haq*, set up their own opinions and desires as the criterion of judgment.

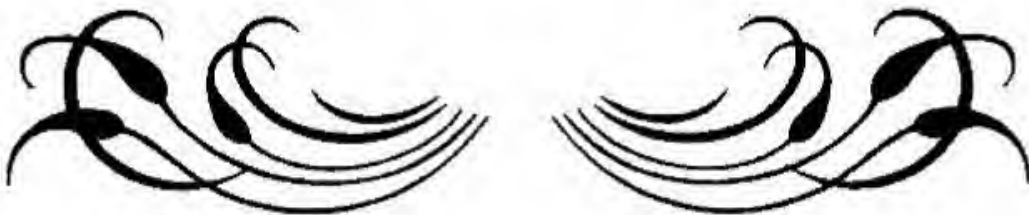
Moreover, to condemn *ulama e deen* and ridicule them is to raise the banner of rebellion against the teachings of religion and merit the description implied in the Verse and traditions about the Jews as stated in these pages.

3) Man should never despair of the mercy and benedictions of Allah. If, in certain circumstances, prayers are not answered as desired, it does not mean that Allah has turned His eyes away from one, but that in His wisdom as the Absolute Wise Lord, the desired thing may be injurious the end of which might not be known to one; or that delay is required for the collective benefit of society; or it is sacrificed for some higher end.

In short, pessimism and despair are not praiseworthy with Allah:

لَا تَأْيِسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْيِسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ
الْكَافِرُونَ
(يوسف ب ١٣ ع ١٠)

Despair not of the mercy of Allah; only those despair of Allah's mercy who are unbelievers. (Yusuf R. 10)



INDEX

A

- A'ad, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83,
84, 85, 86, 89, 90, 106, 348, 349, 567
A'ad e Iram, 90
A'ad e oola, 75
A'haz, 242
A'qir, 434
A'quma, 434
Aaron, 14, 413, 419, 425, 428, 433, 437,
481, 535, 536, 588
Aasiyah, 260
Aazar, 109, 110, 111, 122, 128, 144, 149,
150, 151, 152, 192
Abd e Shams, 508
Abdul Razzaq, 450
Abdullah b. Abi Namra, 143
Abdullah b. Masud, 46, 48, 68, 400, 559
Abdullah b. Mubarak, 600
Abdullah b. Obayd, 579
Abdullah b. Salam, 578, 579, 584, 585
Abdullah b. Salma, 322
Abdullah b. Umar, 527, 573
Abdullah ibn Abbas, 68, 76, 157, 378,
385, 415, 449, 460, 471, 472, 473,
474, 490, 491, 497, 511, 514, 545,
553, 559, 561, 578, 594
Abel, 46, 47, 48
Abi Uwana, 139
Abiel, 435
Abih, 110
Abir, 447
Abu Abdulla Qurtabi, 300
Abu al Saud, 494, 495
Abu Bakar Jasas, 300, 302
Abu Bakar Razi Hanfi, 30, 301
Abu Bakr, 392, 413, 458, 515, 521
Abu Bakr b. Sheebah, 521
Abu Bakr Muhammed b. al Hasan, 392
Abu Hayyan, 468, 528
Abu Hurayra, 139, 149, 153, 383, 393,
473, 485, 494, 495, 564, 589
Abu Ishaq Isphahani Shafa'i, 300
Abu Jafar Shafai, 301
Abu Marrah, 253
Abu Musa Ashari, 569, 571
Abu Muslim Isphahani, 356
Abu Obayda b. al Jarrah, 604, 607
Abu Tahir b. al Ghabari, 392
Abu Tahir b. al Ibadi, 392
Abu Talib, 192, 490, 491
Abu Ubayda Qasim b. Salam, 603
Abu Zar Ghaffari, 37, 486
Abul Abbas Ahmed Qalaqashandi, 242
Abul Faql b. Nasir, 392
Abul Haul, 167
Abul Muzaffar Yahya b. Muhammed b.
Habira, 300
Abul Qasim, 564
Abul Ula Mu'arri, 62
Abul-Aaliya, 527
Abysinnia, 145
Adbeel, 171
Adi, 431
Adoom, 195
Africa, 508
Aghousa Zimoon, 69
Ahmed, 48, 62, 96, 139, 242, 253, 255,
336, 500, 517, 527, 531, 560, 589, 600
Ahmed Yousuf Ahmed Affindi, 253
Ahmed Zaki Pasha, 500
Ahqaf, 75, 76, 85, 99, 117
Aini Sharah Bukhari, 392
Akhnoch, 67, 68
Akrama, 322, 325, 590, 594
Al Bidaya wal Nihaya, 35, 46, 376, 378,
392, 394, 425, 435, 439, 441, 443,
447, 448, 450, 468, 489, 492, 497,
553, 580, 583, 584, 585, 590, 599,
602, 603
Al Fasl, 454, 468
Al Yaqi, 32
Alexander, 63, 253, 553
Ali, 69, 86, 247, 383, 392, 490, 491, 509,
531, 578
Ali b. Musa al Rada, 392
Ali ibn Abi Talha, 490
Alika, 178
Allama Abdul Wahab Najjar, 61, 110
Allama Ibn Hazm Zahiri, 300
Allama Jamaluddin Abul Hasan Ali b.
Yusuf Qutfi, 69
Allama Jauhri, 32

Allama Mashriqi, 149
 Allama Muhammed Anwar Shah, 525
 Allama Philandrus, 254
 Allama Sharistani, 69
 Allama Subki, 32
 Allama Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah,
 392
 Aluma, 434
 Amalika, 203, 214, 253
 Amaliqah, 75
 Aman Ra, 214
 Amin Buk Abdul Hadi, 253
 Amina, 496
 Amir, 89, 602
 Amir Muaviya, 602
 Amlique b. Ud, 90
 Amman, 295, 536
 Ammarah, 589
 Amood e Sakasika, 604
 Amoos, 434
 Amr b. Kulsoom, 266
 Anas, 271, 527, 544, 597
 Anis, 435
 Anoosh, 51, 67
 Aous, 89
 Aphiah, 435
 Aqrab ul Mawarid, 38
 Arafat, 35
 Ararat, 59, 63
 Ard ul Qur'an, 160, 202, 509, 510, 513,
 514
 Ark, 56, 57, 63, 64, 437, 438
 Armenia, 63
 Armenian Mountains, 63
 Armis, 69
 Arphaxad, 109, 111
 Ashab ul Kahf, 171
 Asher, 196
 Asif b. Barkia, 514
 Asqalan, 255, 499
 Asqaliboos, 70, 71
 Ata Ibn ul Saaib, 521
 Aur, 120
 Ayesha, 61
 Ayoni, 214
 Ayun e Musa, 338
 Azaya, 434
 Azdiees, 167
 Azena, 508

B

Ba'al, 426, 427
 Ba'li, 434
 Baal, 167
 Baalath, 488
 Baalbak, 426
 Babylon, 69, 75, 143, 299, 526, 579, 580,
 581
 Badr, 94, 99, 391, 439
 Baghdad, 59
 Bahira e Marrah, 338
 Bahr ul Muheet, 325, 468, 528
 Bait Hebron, 499
 Bait ul Haram, 113
 Bakht Nasar, 603
 Balata, 234
 Banu Edom, 536, 537
 Banu Jarham, 159
 Banu Katura, 241
 Banu Sam, 75
 Banu Yaqtan, 536, 537
 Banu-Eam, 255
 Bar'a b. A'zib, 439
 Barahin Bahara, 146
 Barka e Pharaoh, 338
 Bartoum, 253
 Basama, 176
 Bashama, 171, 176
 Bashima, 536
 Basiloos, 70
 Batra, 91
 Baydawi, 482, 488, 530, 538
 Bazzar, 272
 Becorath, 435
 Beer-Saba, 157
 Belshazar, 580
 Benjamin, 195, 196, 222, 223, 224, 225,
 226, 227, 229, 230, 435
 Berechia, 587
 Bethoron, 488
 Bethuel Nabor, 175
 Bible, 32, 33, 36, 39, 42, 51, 63, 69, 73,
 89, 97, 115, 157, 165, 166, 171, 173,
 175, 176, 178, 179, 187, 189, 195,
 198, 199, 201, 202, 211, 213, 253,
 256, 341, 348, 360, 394, 438, 463,
 464, 569, 578
 Bilhah, 195, 196
 Bilqis, 509, 521
 Bou Ramses, 253

Budh-Gaya, 167
 Bukhari, 34, 42, 68, 137, 138, 139, 143,
 145, 146, 149, 157, 160, 162, 188,
 215, 302, 383, 390, 391, 392, 393,
 398, 399, 400, 415, 439, 456, 459,
 486, 494, 495, 498, 544, 554, 563,
 564, 590, 605
 Burj, 91
 Bustani, 539

C

Cain, 46, 47, 48, 358
 Cainan, 51
 Caldaenean, 144
 Caleb b. Jephuneh, 348
 Caleb b. Yuhanna, 419
 Canaan, 58, 60, 61, 64, 196, 203, 204,
 219, 221, 222, 230, 231, 232, 234,
 327, 337, 411, 412, 413, 536
 Chaldeans, 536, 538, 553
 Chaldees, 120
 Chosroes of Persia, 580
 Cyrus, 581

D

Da'iratul Muarraf ul Islamia, 112
 Da'wat ul Rusul-ilallah, 255
 Damascus, 48, 242, 449, 585, 603, 604
 Dan, 196, 394, 587
 Dara, 580, 581, 587
 Darius, 587
 Dead Sea, 179
 Deluge, 59, 60, 62, 63, 71, 73
 Dumah, 171

E

Eber, 109, 111
 Edom, 385, 536, 537, 538
 Egypt, 36, 69, 70, 73, 75, 90, 138, 145,
 146, 147, 167, 172, 179, 198, 202,
 203, 204, 219, 220, 221, 223, 224,
 226, 229, 230, 232, 234, 235, 236,
 238, 241, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255,
 262, 272, 273, 274, 275, 279, 280,
 289, 299, 304, 312, 313, 318, 327,
 328, 329, 333, 334, 337, 348, 349,
 359, 360, 380, 392, 396, 397, 400,

407, 408, 412, 413, 433, 434, 500,
 509, 536
 Eika, 241, 242
 Eliezer, 155, 175, 180
 Elizabeth, 588, 589, 597, 605
 Encyclopaedia of Islam, 580
 Enoch, 51, 67, 69
 Enos, 51
 Entel, 539
 Ephraim, 235, 252, 394, 412, 431, 448,
 538
 Esau, 175, 176, 195, 536, 538
 Eukabud, 259
 Euphrates, 36, 59, 63, 75, 90, 144, 358,
 412, 449, 550
 Ezekiel, 419, 425, 581, 582, 604
 Ezrius, 167
 Ezra, 577, 578

F

Faddan Araam, 143
 Faj el Naqata, 90
 Falusa, 251
 Fath ul Bari, 145, 153, 167, 301, 302,
 303, 392, 393, 458, 490, 491, 537,
 544, 545, 550, 553, 560, 564, 587,
 588, 589, 590, 597
 Fath ul Bayan, 276
 Fazil Muhammed Namar Nablusi, 253
 Fidak, 400
 Firra, 526

G

Gabriel, 40, 158, 168, 351, 355, 391, 595,
 605
 Gad, 196
 Gautam Buddha, 167, 571, 572, 602, 603
 Georgie Zaidan, 91
 Gershom, 274
 Gezer, 488
 Ghousa Zi-moon, 69
 Ghulam Ahmed Qadiani, 531, 560, 562
 Goliath, 434, 439, 440, 441, 447
 Gomorrah, 179, 180, 181, 184, 193
 Goshen, 234, 251
 Greece, 71
 Gulf of Aqaba, 90, 337, 449
 Gulf of Suez, 337, 338

H

Haakim, 139, 472, 473
 Haaris Ashari, 600
 Hadar, 171
 Hadramaut, 76, 86, 90, 247, 508, 536
 Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani, 150
 Hafiz Ibn Teemya, 216, 217, 392
 Hafiz Imam Baghvi, 89
 Hafiz Muhammed b. Hazm, 468
 Haghar, 147
 Hajar, 21, 24, 41, 44, 89, 90, 112, 119, 150, 152, 153, 167, 174, 185, 241, 300, 301, 302, 303, 458, 539, 544, 553, 559, 566, 587, 603
 Hajar e Thamud, 90
 Hajira, 139, 145, 146, 147, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 161, 162, 167, 172
 Haman, 295, 296, 311, 379, 405
 Hamas, 90
 Hamdani, 492
 Hamza, 589
 Hanna, 251, 434
 Hannah d. Faqood, 589
 Haram, 91, 98, 113, 172, 253, 486
 Haran, 140, 144, 179
 Hardwar, 167
 Harith, 91, 400
 Haroon b. Imran, 585
 Harut, 524, 525, 526, 527
 Hassan Basri, 271, 490, 527
 Havar, 89
 Havva, 32
 Hayyah, 288
 Hazor, 488
 Hebron, 474, 499
 Hedad b. Hedar, 603
 Hermis I, 73
 Hermis ul Haramsa, 69
 Hexus, 214, 253
 Hifz ur Rehman Sayuharvi, 14, 15
 Hijaz, 35, 90, 113, 202, 241, 400, 402, 426, 449
 Hilal b. Yasaf, 68
 Horeb, 273, 350
 Horius, 167
 Hudhud, 484
 Humayr, 508

I

Iblis, 21, 22, 23, 25, 31
 Ibn Abi Hatim, 68, 271, 383, 497, 501, 544, 569, 604
 Ibn Asakir, 48, 431, 501, 537, 538, 539, 585, 587, 602, 603, 604
 Ibn Asir, 413
 Ibn Ataulah al Sikandri, 204
 Ibn Batuta, 499
 Ibn e Abi Shaiba, 139
 Ibn Habban, 67, 527, 543, 544
 Ibn Hatim, 272
 Ibn Hayan, 357
 Ibn Hayyan Undlasi, 216
 Ibn Ishaq, 34, 67, 431, 540
 Ibn Jarir, 68, 151, 213, 269, 271, 272, 325, 447, 449, 491, 497, 516, 526, 544, 554, 561, 569, 579
 Ibn Jarir Tibri, 68, 271, 579
 Ibn Jauzi, 392
 Ibn Kathir, 37, 48, 68, 69, 89, 98, 109, 131, 153, 178, 213, 253, 269, 271, 272, 276, 300, 321, 322, 324, 325, 341, 342, 349, 356, 376, 379, 384, 392, 398, 413, 419, 421, 434, 443, 447, 449, 480, 489, 490, 491, 492, 496, 497, 498, 499, 501, 511, 514, 516, 521, 525, 527, 528, 529, 543, 545, 550, 554, 559, 562, 563, 571, 578, 579, 581, 584, 585, 587, 588, 590, 594, 598, 600, 603, 604, 605, 607
 Ibn Khishma, 540
 Ibn Khuzaimah, 139
 Ibn Qayyam, 392
 Ibn Sheebah, 521
 Ibn ul Saaib, 521
 Ibrahim Nakhai, 590
 Idreen II, 69
 Idreen III, 69
 Ilawus Amoon, 70
 Imam Abu Hanifa, 65, 300
 Imam Ahmed, 48
 Imam Qurtubi, 526
 Imam Razi, 141, 217, 302, 356, 453, 468, 491, 493, 498, 543
 Imam Tha'ibi, 89, 435, 447, 597
 Imran, 19, 41, 52, 118, 167, 168, 259, 378, 391, 475, 574, 585, 587, 589, 590, 593, 594, 595, 597, 598, 604
 Imran b. Nashi, 589

Injeel, 451
 Iram, 75
 Iraq, 60, 63, 76, 125, 133, 134, 172, 350,
 358, 359, 396, 400, 413, 449, 509,
 554, 585
 Ishaq b. Bashir, 584
 Ishbak, 178
 Issachar, 196
 Izhar ul Haq, 348

J

Jabir, 89
 Jadis, 75
 Jafar b. Muhammed, 474
 Jann, 288
 Jannat ul Khuld, 36
 Jannat-ul Ma'wa, 34
 Jared, 51
 Jarwah, 585
 Jeddah, 35
 Jeerz, 255
 Jeremiah, 579, 580, 581, 582, 603, 604
 Jericho, 394, 412, 413
 Jerusalem, 400, 413, 416, 451, 461, 464,
 474, 486, 488, 520, 529, 530, 578,
 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 604
 Jesse, 447, 463, 474
 Jesus Christ, 75, 253, 358, 419, 583, 606
 Jetur, 171
 Jewish Encyclopaedia Targoom, 509
 Jokshan, 178
 Jordan, 179, 396, 411, 412, 439, 449,
 602, 606
 Joseph, 195, 196, 197, 251, 252, 253,
 315, 316, 412, 413, 428, 431, 531,
 535, 538, 539
 Judah, 196, 435, 447, 448, 461, 479, 488
 Jupiter, 69, 426

K

Ka'b Ahbar, 521, 526, 527, 579, 584, 585
 Kadar b Salif, 98
 Kadesh, 385, 536
 Kaldi, 110
 Kali Devi, 167
 Kaliba, 91
 Kant, 539
 Kapil, 571
 Kashi, 167

Katura, 241
 Kedar, 97, 171, 401
 Kedemah, 171
 Keturah, 178
 Khafaji, 468, 598
 Khalqiya, 585
 Khanoq, 67, 69, 73
 Khayber, 400
 Khazin, 99
 Khizr, 385
 Khuda Baksh Kashmiri, 95
 Kifl, 67, 431, 569, 571, 572, 573, 575
 Kirmani, 153
 Kish, 435
 Kitab ul Anbiyah, 76, 452
 Kitab ul Astarqaq, 139
 Kitab ul Fasl, 468
 Kitab ul Tafsir, 149, 152, 153, 321
 Kitab ul Tauhid, 139
 Korah, 311, 378, 379, 381, 384, 451
 Kumkum, 91

L

Laban, 175, 195
 Laisa, 176
 Lamech, 51
 Lavi, 259
 Leah, 195, 196
 Lebanon, 412, 488
 Levi, 196, 435
 Lisan ul Arab, 38, 290

M

Ma'arib, 508
 Ma'as, 434
 Maalik b. Anas, 271
 Mahleel, 51
 Mahalath, 536
 Mahavir, 167
 Mahdi, 140
 Mahlaqa, 176
 Mahlat, 171
 Makatal, 434
 Makfila, 253
 Makida, 509
 Makkah, 61, 99, 112, 115, 160, 161, 162,
 166, 167, 169, 189, 198, 220, 416,
 486, 560
 Malhol, 563

Manaf, 69
 Manphetah, 253, 254, 255
 Maqatil, 527
 Marathshi, 111
 Marut, 524, 525, 526, 527
 Marva, 158
 Mary, 167, 587, 589, 590, 597
 Masheh, 89
 Masjid e Haram, 486
 Masjid-e-Aqsa, 486
 Massa, 171
 Masudi, 90
 Mathew, 553
 Maula Qasim, 602
 Maulana Abdul Haq, 348
 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, 219, 356
 Maulana Ghulam Rasool Chiryakoti, 146
 Maulana Mahmood Hassan Deobandi,
 517
 Maulana Rehmat ullah Kairanvi, 348
 Maulvi Chiragh Ali, 509, 531
 Maulvi Syed Muhammed Hasan Amrohi,
 531
 Mauza ul Furqan, 525
 Mauza ul Qur'an, 260, 295, 555
 Mazboor, 451
 Medan, 178
 Medina, 61, 112, 113, 114, 115, 400, 401
 Mediterranean Sea, 337
 Megiddo, 488
 Mesopotamia, 175
 Methuselah, 51
 Mibsam, 171
 Michal, 441
 Midian, 178, 241, 242, 246, 264, 266,
 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 273, 274,
 275, 276, 280, 283, 403, 426
 Millo, 488
 Mir Suhaylee, 109
 Misda, 97
 Mishma, 171
 Misr, 70
 Misr Aam, 70
 Moeen, 508
 Moriah, 165
 Mou'jam ul Buldan, 241, 508
 Mount Hor, 383, 385, 536
 Mount Judi, 59
 Mount Safa, 158
 Mount Sal'a, 401
 Mount Sinai, 275, 341, 344, 364, 366,
 367, 373, 398, 564

Mount Uhad, 401
 Mu'afir, 508
 Muaan, 241
 Muaarif, 112, 426, 501, 508, 536
 Muammar, 600
 Mufti Abduhu, 367
 Muhammad, 37, 122, 255, 338, 392, 447,
 531, 574, 575
 Muhammad Ahmed Advi, 255
 Muhammad Ali Lahori, 531
 Muhammad ibn. Ishaq, 447
 Muhammad Raf'at, 338
 Mujahid, 109, 322, 325, 514, 516, 527,
 559, 561, 569, 571, 584, 590, 594
 Mujtaba, 140
 Musnad e Ahmed, 527, 600
 Mustadrak, 472, 473, 474, 603

N

Nabiyeem, 513
 Nablus, 145, 234, 253
 Nabti, 91
 Nadawt ul Musannifeen, 15
 Nadeer, 400
 Nahor, 109, 111, 587
 Nahshoon, 447
 Namrud, 133, 135, 138, 176, 191
 Naphsh, 171
 Naphtali, 196, 394
 Nasim ul Riyaz, 468
 Nasr, 55, 62, 76, 604
 Nauf Bakkali, 385, 499
 Nebajoth, 171
 Nebuchadnazzar, 579, 580, 583
 Nile, 70, 259, 279, 325
 Ninevah, 359, 549, 550, 551, 553, 554,
 555, 556, 558, 559, 561, 562, 563
 Nisai, 153, 322, 359
 Noodi, 301, 303

O

Obayd, 89, 579
 Oman, 76

P

Padan-aram, 195
 Parbati Devi, 167
 Peleg, 109, 111

Persian Gulf. 63, 76
 Pharaïm. 253
 Pharaoh. 90, 145, 146, 209, 213, 214, 215, 216, 218, 219, 220, 221, 232, 234, 236, 251, 253, 254, 255, 256, 259, 261, 263, 264, 266, 274, 278, 279, 283, 284, 285, 286, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 304, 305, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 351, 355, 379, 380, 396, 397, 402, 403, 405, 406, 407, 408, 557
 Phathas. 425
 Pithom, 253, 254
 Potiphar. 203, 206, 207, 210, 216, 217, 236
 Prayag. 167
 Psalms. 450, 451, 452, 453, 459, 465, 476, 508, 515
 Puri. 167

Q

Qabar Basha. 91
 Qadaar. 97
 Qahal. 378
 Qahtani. 508
 Qamat. 259
 Qara. 90
 Qarah e Mau. 36
 Qarol Bagh. 15
 Qaroon. 378
 Qas re hint. 91
 Qasas ul Anmbiya. 86, 253, 288, 299, 358, 401, 489, 496, 514, 537, 599
 Qatada. 178, 322, 325, 348, 415, 459, 489, 514, 527, 543, 544, 554, 578, 590, 594
 Qaza Valley, 400
 Qazi Abu Bakr b. al Arabi, 392
 Qazi Abu Ya'la Hanbli, 392
 Qazi Ayyaz, 468
 Qila. 91
 Qinan. 51, 67, 73
 Qinqah. 400
 Qurayza. 400, 402

R

Rabi' b. Anas. 527
 Rachel. 176, 195, 196, 197
 Rajab, 14
 Ram Chandraji. 167
 Ramlah. 99
 Ramses, 203, 232, 251, 253, 254, 329, 334
 Raudh ul Anaf. 109
 Rebekah. 175, 176, 195
 Red Sea, 202, 241, 275, 320, 327, 336, 337, 340, 341, 392, 405
 Rehoboam, 530
 Reu. 109, 111
 Reuben, 196, 202
 Rooh ul Ma'ani. 79, 89, 98, 260, 325, 345, 348, 356, 392, 427, 434, 459, 470, 471, 494, 549, 550
 Rubabbîn Sifar, 97
 Rumi, 431
 Ruqayya, 145

S

Sa'd b. Abu Waqas. 416
 Sa'eir. 536
 Saami, 426
 Saamia, 75
 Saba, 42, 44, 157, 239, 447, 448, 453, 457, 458, 465, 479, 480, 484, 487, 488, 508, 509, 528, 529, 538, 575
 Sabbath, 321, 406, 407, 474
 Sabeans, 536, 537, 538
 Sadooq, 97
 Saeed b. Jabeer, 385, 559, 590
 Saeed b. Musayyab, 497, 603
 Sael e Iram, 508
 Safwan b. Assaal, 321
 Saghani, 110
 Sairabad, 585
 Salah, 109, 111, 536
 Salmoon, 447
 Sam, 75, 89, 146, 536, 537
 Samar b. Atiya, 603
 Saphura, 270
 Sarah, 138, 140, 141, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 155, 156, 157, 173, 175, 179
 Satan, 13, 20, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30, 33, 35, 38, 43, 45, 46, 148, 199, 212, 213, 233, 263, 386, 496, 502, 506, 528.

547, 555, 556, 570, 571, 601
 Saturn, 426
 Saul, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 537
 Scripture, 40, 67, 108, 117, 122, 169, 172, 198, 284, 287, 347, 348, 358, 391, 398, 399, 402, 412, 451, 465, 497, 498, 507, 521, 524, 525, 530, 538, 553, 567, 574, 583, 599, 606
 Serug, 109
 Seth, 51
 Sha'abi, 322
 Sha'yoona, 247
 Shabaam, 247
 Shah Abdul Qadir, 210, 220, 260, 288, 295, 318, 355, 488, 525, 543, 554, 555, 556, 560, 563, 571, 593, 594
 Shah Waliullah, 384
 Shakim, 253
 Sheba, 501, 506, 508, 509, 510, 511, 513, 515, 517, 518, 520, 521, 522
 Shees, 51, 67, 69, 73
 Shem, 109, 111
 Shifa, 468, 498, 598
 Shikam, 145, 253
 Shuah, 178
 Shutam, 431
 Sift ul Hanna, 251
 Sila, 401
 Simeon, 196
 Sinai desert, 241, 412, 413
 Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, 336
 Sita Devi, 167
 Sodom, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 187, 189, 193
 Soof, 434
 Sou'baan, 288
 Sphinx, 167
 Sprenger, 112, 118
 St. John, 425
 Subh-ul-A'asha, 242
 Suddi, 46, 279, 342, 376, 442, 523, 527
 Sufyan Sauri, 603
 Surikha, 585
 Surique, 585
 Suwa, 55
 Syed Abu Nasr Ahmed Husain Bhopali, 62
 Syed Hussain Ahmed Madni, 517
 Syed Mahmood Aaloosi, 89, 356, 459, 494
 Syed Suleman Nadvi, 160

Syria, 75, 90, 172, 198, 202, 241, 348, 396, 400, 411, 413, 426, 427, 449, 499, 513, 517, 536

T

Taba-bia, 508
 Tabai Mujahid, 569
 Tabernacle, 413, 433, 437, 438, 439, 442
 Tabuk, 241
 Tadmor, 488
 Tafsir-e-Ahmadi, 336
 Tahav, 434
 Taj ul Uroos, 109
 Tarikh Ibn Khuldun, 580
 Tarikh ul Adab ul Hindi, 62
 Tarikh ul Hukma, 69, 73
 Tarjuman ul Qur'an, 219, 356, 359, 366, 546, 558, 581
 Tarmim, 86
 Tarsis, 508
 Taxila, 167
 Tayanadartal, 39
 Tazkira, 149
 Tel Aviv, 359
 Tema, 171
 Terah, 109, 110, 111
 Thamud, 75, 89, 90, 91, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 247, 314, 316, 348, 349, 558, 567
 Tibrani, 139
 Tibri, 68, 172, 266, 271, 272, 419, 491, 539, 579, 584
 Tigris, 36, 59, 63, 69, 358
 Timah, 400
 Tirmizi, 139, 321, 322, 600
 Tisam, 75
 Toom, 253
 Torah, 75, 109, 346, 347, 348, 349, 351, 359, 363, 364, 365, 366, 373, 382, 395, 408, 433, 434, 437, 443, 450, 451, 452, 458, 460, 515, 522, 525, 530, 537, 538, 539, 546, 579, 581, 583, 585, 599, 604, 607

U

Ubaai b. Ka'ab, 412
 Ubab, 536
 Ubad, 447
 Umar, 508, 527, 573

Uniazab, 447
 Ur, 359
 Urdsher, 580, 581
 Uriah, 461, 462, 479
 Usman, 145
 Ussama, 413
 Uz, 535, 537, 538, 539

V

Va-ila, 91
 Valley Ibn Ali, 247

W

Wadd, 55
 Wahab b. Munabbah, 89, 431, 447, 521,
 545, 579, 602, 605
 Waleed bin Mus'ab bin Ryan, 253
 Walid bin Muslim, 604
 Wensinek, 112
 Wuddan, 178

Y

Ya'zar, 425
 Yaguth, 55
 Yahu, 434
 Yaqoot, 499
 Yargam, 434

Yarud, 51, 67, 73
 Yas-hur, 378
 Yasin, 425
 Yasr, 176
 Yathreb, 400, 401
 Yauq, 55
 Yazar, 425
 Yemen, 76, 202, 241, 427, 489, 502, 508,
 509
 Yubab, 537, 538
 Yuseen, 255

Z

Zaboor, 450, 451
 Zaghar, 189
 Zahhak, 514, 590
 Zahra, 527
 Zahri, 68, 527
 Zam-Zam, 157, 158
 Zarch, 537, 538, 539
 Zayd b. Aslam, 497, 594
 Zayd b. Waqid, 604
 Zebulun, 196
 Zeor, 435
 Zilpah, 195, 196
 Zimran, 178
 Zipporah, 274
 Zoar, 189, 394
 Zous, 70
 Zous Amoon, 70

